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THE  
**Ecclesiastical Year:**

TO WHICH ARE ADDED  
**THE LEGENDS**

OR  
**THE LIVES OF THE SAINTS.**

TRANSLATED FROM THE GERMAN

BY

**Rev. Theodore Hoethen,**  
PASTOR OF HOLY CROSS, ALBANY, N. Y.

NEW YORK:  
PUBLISHED BY S. ZICKEL.  
1864.



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THE  
ECCLESIASTICAL YEAR:

ITS

FESTIVALS AND HOLY SEASONS,

By REV. B. G. BAYERLE,  
RECTOR OF PEMPLEFORT, NEAR COLOGNE, GERMANY.

TO WHICH ARE ADDED THE LEGENDS

OR

THE LIVES OF THE SAINTS,

BY

REV. DR. ALBAN STOLZ.

A HOUSEHOLD WORK FOR INSTRUCTION AND DEVOTION.

TRANSLATED FROM THE GERMAN BY

REV. THEODORE NOETHEN,  
PASTOR OF "HOLY CROSS," ALBANY, N. Y.

Published under the Approbation of Sixteen American Prelates.

(See next pages.)

Divine Providence has given in our days a great mission to the Catholic press. It is her duty, to preserve the principles of order and of faith where they will exist, and to draw them forth from the obscurity, into which impiety or religious indifference may have consigned them.

PIUS P. P., IX.

VOL. I.

NEW YORK, 1864,  
S. ZICKEL, PUBLISHER, 113 RIVINGTON STREET.

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# THE ECCLESIASTICAL YEAR

is approved by the highest dignitaries of the Church in Germany, viz. :

His Eminence JOHN v. GEISSEL, Cardinal Archbishop of Cologne ;

The most Rev. Prince Archbishop of Vienna ;

The most Rev. Prince Bishop of Breslau ;

and the English translation of the same is published under the distinguished approbations of sixteen of the most prominent Prelates of America, from whom the following letters were received prior to February, 1864, by the translator, REV. THEOD. NOETHEN, Pastor of Holy Cross, Albany, N. Y.

The "Ecclesiastical Year," is a work of merit. I approve of its publication and I take pleasure in recommending it to the faithful.

*New-York, January 14th.*

WM. STARRS, Vicar General,  
ADMINISTRATOR OF THE ARCH-DIOCESE OF NEW YORK.

*Cincinnati, January 1, 1864.*

REV. DEAR SIR—Regarding your translation of Rev. Dr. BAYERLE's "Ecclesiastical Year," and the "Legends or Lives of the Saints," by Rev. ALBAN STOLZ, as a most timely and valuable addition to our library of Catholic instruction and literature. I beg to give the publication my hearty approval.

Please consider me a subscriber for six copies,

Very respectfully yours,

✠ J. B. PURCELL, ARCHBISHOP OF CINCINNATI.

REV. DEAR SIR—I am very much pleased with what I have seen of your English translation of the "Ecclesiastical Year," and "The Legends of the Saints," and I have no hesitation in approving the whole work, and commending it warmly to the patronage of the Catholics of my Diocese.

I remain very sincerely

Your friend and obedient servant in Christ,

*Albany, January 12, 1864.*

✠ JOHN, BISHOP OF ALBANY, N. Y.

REV. DEAR SIR—The "Ecclesiastical Year," and the "Catholic Legends," which you have undertaken to publish, is certainly a praiseworthy work. It will be to every family a source by which to obtain knowledge, and will encourage the growth of true Catholic devotion and piety. May your labors be blessed !

Respectfully yours in Christ,

*Alton, January 13, 1864.*

✠ HENRY D. JUNCKER, BISHOP OF ALTON.

*Burlington, Vt., December 30, 1863.*

REV. SIR—I have examined with interest the first number of the work you are about to publish, the "Ecclesiastical Year," by Rev. B. G. BAYERLE, to which are added the Legends, by Rev. Dr. ALBAN STOLZ.

Should the subsequent numbers be equal to this, I consider the work as one, which will be very useful, and I therefore recommend it, and wish for it a very extensive circulation.

Respectfully yours,

✠ LOUIS, BISHOP OF BURLINGTON, VERMONT.

*Chicago, January 26th, 1864.*

REV. DEAR SIR—I have received Your excellent publication, the “Ecclesiastical Year,” and am much pleased with it. I wish we had many works of the kind in our language. I trust I shall see it completed very soon.

Truly yours in Christ,

✝ JAMES, BISHOP OF CHICAGO.

REV. DEAR SIR—I have read the first number of the “Ecclesiastical Year,” you had the kindness to send me. I have been much pleased with it, and I have no doubt, it will be well received by our Catholic population.

I am, Rev. dear sir, devotedly yours,

*Cleveland, January 14, 1864.*

✝ AMEDEUS, BISHOP OF CLEVELAND.

*Dubuque, January 14, 1864.*

REV. DEAR SIR,—I am in receipt of the first number of the “Ecclesiastical Year,” and the “Catholic Legends,” and feel much pleasure in stating, that it meets with my warmest commendation.

I consider it a very valuable addition to our Catholic literature, and desire to see it widely circulated throughout my Diocese.

I remain, Rev. dear Sir, yours

sincerely in Christ,

✝ CLEMENT SMYTH, BISHOP OF DUBUQUE.

*Erie, Pa. January 5, 1864.*

REV. DEAR SIR—The “Ecclesiastical Year” is a publication which I hail with delight, as being a most substantial and edifying addition to the family library of every devout household. It seems to combine in one, the excellencies of several other works in devout use, and in addition to have peculiarities of its own, which add to its value.

I would be glad to see it on the book-shelves, or gracing the centre-tables of all pious families whose vernacular is the English, the more as your portion of the labor in presenting it in an English dress, appears to have been not only idiomatically, but elegantly done.

I hope the publication will meet the success, which it so abundantly merits.

I remain faithfully

Yours in Christ,

✝ J. M. YOUNG, BISHOP OF ERIE

*Providence, January 4, 1864.*

REV. DEAR SIR—I beg leave to thank you for the first number of the “Ecclesiastical Year,” which you have been so kind as to send me. I am much pleased with it. The style is good, simple and earnest, and such as cannot fail to speak to the heart. It contains much, that is instructive as well as edifying. Its circulation amongst our people will do good, and you have my best wishes for the success of the publication. I am glad to see you devote your leisure hours to these translations from standard German writers. You are thus helping to open up a rich mine, which has been too long neglected.

With great respect I remain,

Your obedient servant and brother in Christ.

✝ F. P. MCFARLAND, BISHOP OF HARTFORD.

*Louisville, January 3, 1864.*

REV. DEAR SIR—After a hasty examination of the first number of your “Ecclesiastical Year,” translated from the German, I take much pleasure in certifying my belief, that it will prove a most valuable addition to our ecclesiastical literature.

I wish you much success in the publication.

Yours truly in our Lord,

✝ M. J. SPALDING, BISHOP OF LOUISVILLE.



*St. Andrews, Cornwall, Canada. Jan. 11, 1864.*

MY DEAR FATHER NOETHEN,—I have examined attentively the first number of your translation of the Rev. Dr. BAYERLE'S "Ecclesiastical Year," and the Catholic Legends, by Rev. Dr. ALBAN STOLZ. You have rendered a great service to the English speaking Catholics, by making accessible to them a work so replete with solid religious instruction. I know of no work, recently published calculated to produce so great an amount of good.

With my respects and best wishes, believe me, my dear Father Noethen,

Yours very faithfully,

✠ EDWARD HORAN, BISHOP OF KINGSTON, CANADA.

*Milwaukee, January 4, 1864.*

REV. AND DEAR SIR—The "*Ecclesiastical Year*," which the untiring zeal of the Rev. translator of Goffine's "*Devout Instructions*," now also introduces to the American Catholics, deserves to be known,—and if once known, it will be as highly appreciated here, as it is all along the Rhine.

Instructions and devotions, as here suggested all the year round by the Church, are assuredly above all others best adapted to teach and elevate the mind, and to purify the Christian soul, particularly if supported by practical lessons from the lives of the saints, as exhibited in the judicious, vigorous, and yet most popular style in which Dr. ALBAN STOLZ so eminently excels, and whose learning and great intellect valiantly grapples with every unsound and false maxim of the day. I can therefore but approve and recommend the "*Ecclesiastical Year*" sincerely wishing that it may become a daily companion of devotion to every household in my diocese.

✠ JOHN M. HENNI, BISHOP OF MILWAUKEE.

*Pittsburgh, January 13, 1864.*

REV. DEAR SIR—I have read the first number of Rev. B. G. BAYERLE'S great work, and the Catholic Legends by Rev. Dr. ALBAN STOLZ, translated by you. I was much pleased with it, and have not the least doubt that such a work is calculated to instruct the Catholics who will peruse it, and at the same time infuse and nourish in their hearts a tender piety.

In conclusion permit me to say that I endorse the approval and commendation which the Rt. Rev. Bishop of Albany has bestowed upon your work.

I remain, reverend dear sir, yours

devotedly in Christ,

✠ M. DOMENEC, BISHOP OF PITTSBURGH.

REV. DEAR SIR—Please add my name to the approbation given to you by the Rt. Rev. Bishop of Albany, and believe me to be

Respectfully yours

*Portland, January 12, 1864.*

✠ DAVID WM. BACON, BISHOP OF PORTLAND.

*St. Vincents, Westmoreland, Pa., January 26, 1864.*

REV. AND DEAR SIR—"The Ecclesiastical Year" by Rev. B. G. BAYERLE, the first number of which you have sent me for inspection and approval, has been distinguished already in Germany by the approval and commendation of the most learned and zealous Dignitaries of the Church. All, therefore, I can say about it is, that I would wish to see it in every family in the translation in which you offer it to the English speaking Catholics of this country.

Very respectfully yours,

✠ BONIFACE WIMMER, ABBOT.

## PREFACE.

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AMONG Pagans, chronology had a deeper meaning than the mere counting of days, weeks, months, and years. All important events of the past were connected by it, remarkable occurrences in the history of nations or of families were solemnly celebrated on their anniversaries, to perpetuate the memory of them. If this custom existed even among Pagans, why should Christians neglect it? The history of Christianity, as God's kingdom upon earth restored to mankind by the Son of God, reveals to us in a more remarkable manner the wonderful deeds of an Almighty, All-wise, and All-benevolent Providence, than does the history of all the nations upon earth; it is, indeed, nothing but a great, uninterrupted series of extraordinary dispensations from the hand of God for the salvation of mankind. How could the Catholic, then, allow the many beautiful and significant Festivals and holy seasons, called the Ecclesiastical Year, to pass by without exciting and reviving his religious feelings? The Festivals alone, however, do not produce such effects; each day does it; for on each day does the Church place before us the life of some glorious Saint—as an example and guide. We will, therefore, present a work to the public, which combines in itself every quality to incite and strengthen true religious sentiment. That this work may correspond with its object, the translator has used as a basis the “Ecclesiastical Year,” of Rev. B. G. BAYERLE, for the instruction on Sundays and Festivals during the ecclesiastical year, whilst the Legends of ALBAN STOLZ furnish us with the lives of the Saints. Both authors are known as ornaments

to Catholic literature. We selected the Legends of A. STOLZ, because they treat not only on the lives of the Saints, but point out to us whatever corresponds with the object of the meditations, which are the practical applications we can make after reading the Legends. Dr. STOLZ presents, the Saint to the reader in such a manner, that he serves him as a model and an example through life.

That this work may assist in extending the Holy Catholic Church, and thereby giving greater Honor and Glory to God, is the sincere wish of

THE TRANSLATOR.

*Albany, N. Y., Feast of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin 1863.*



# INTRODUCTION.

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## THE ECCLESIASTICAL YEAR AND ITS DIVISION.

THE Ecclesiastical Year is the compendium of all the feasts and holy seasons instituted by the Holy Catholic Church, to remind us of the great mysteries of divine love, of the manifold and important events in the history of our Redemption, and of the lives and virtues of her glorious martyrs, inviting us to celebrate their feasts in a becoming manner.

Whatever Almighty God has done for the salvation of man from the beginning of the world through all times, is presented to us during the Ecclesiastical Year in its principal events; so that every year we live over again these events, contemplating them with the eyes of our spirit, and thereby exciting, reviving and strengthening our faith, hope, and love for God, our Creator, Redeemer and Sanctifier.

Now, as every event, occurring in the lapse of time through God's grace, is intimately connected with each other, and in this connection forms the history of the divine Kingdom upon earth, whose centre is Jesus Christ, the Redeemer of the world and the Restorer of the divine inheritance, lost by sin;—in the same manner each festival and holy season, referring to the history of the Kingdom of God, is closely connected one with the other, and forms, as it were, a great cycle, passing in uninterrupted succession through the Ecclesiastical Year, the centre of which is again Jesus Christ, the Redeemer of the world. In the Gospel He Himself calls the work of Redemption and Restoration of the divine Kingdom, announced and represented in the old, but perfected by Him in the new law, *The Year of Grace*, of which the Jubilee of the old law was the type. For, as in the Jewish Jubilee, all debts were remitted to the debtors, the paternal inheritance restored to those that had mortgaged or otherwise lost it, and all freed that were in slavery;—so in the same manner in the Year of Grace,

sin and its punishment should be forgiven to man; the lost inheritance of heaven should be restored again to them, and freedom from the servitude of hell be their portion. (Lev. 25: 10; Luke 4: 18, 19.) How beautiful, therefore, and full of meaning, is the connection of the year of Grace with the sanctified year of the Church, in which all the events of the former are again commemorated and recalled to the minds of those who are redeemed by Christ.

Among the many important events in the history of the divine Kingdom, some are of special interest, excelling others; events of less interest, however, either preceding or following them, are connected with them.

The three principal Feasts of the ecclesiastical year correspond very naturally with the three prominent events of the Jubilee, or the Year of Grace. Thus the Feasts of the Ecclesiastical Year are divided into three parts, each connected with one of the three Feasts, receiving its name therefrom. In such manner the principal Festivals have a time of preparation and of after-celebration. *Before* the Feast, the faithful are told to prepare themselves in a becoming manner for the celebration of the Feast itself, and *after* it, they continue to meditate upon the mysteries presented to their minds on the Festival itself, reaping salutary fruits therefrom for religion and morality.

The three principal parts of the Ecclesiastical Year are:—

1. *Christmas*, reminding us of the beginning of our Redemption through the Incarnation and Birth of the Son of God. During this holy season the history of the early life of Christ is placed before us. The preparation for this holy season is Advent, reminding us of the old law, and of the preparations made during that time by our heavenly Father for the birth of his only-begotten Son, and exhorting us to prepare ourselves in a worthy manner for Christmas.

This holy season ends with the 6th Sunday after Epiphany. The *first part* of the Ecclesiastical Year, therefore, reminds us of the infinite love of *God the Father*, who, in his unbounded mercy, decreed the Redemption of mankind, preparing them in manifold ways for the Advent of Christ, whom He finally sent.

2. *Easter*, reminding us of the fulfilment of our Redemption through the Son of God, who, by His death on the cross, consummated the atoning sacrifice for the sins of the whole world, but who, by His Resurrection, perfected the work of Redemption. During this holy season, therefore, is presented to us the history of the last days of our Saviour on earth. The preparation for Easter is Lent, at which time we are to meditate upon the sufferings and death of the Son of God, and prepare ourselves in a becoming manner for the Feast of His Resurrection; this holy season ends on the Vigil of Pentecost.

In this second part of the Ecclesiastical Year is revealed to us the infinite love of *God the Son*, who, in His own person, undertook and accomplished the work of Redemption decreed by His heavenly Father.

3. *Pentecost* reminding us of the application of the fruits of Redemption to man, of the spreading of His divine kingdom on earth through the Holy Ghost,

who on that day, for the first time, descended upon the apostles and disciples of our Lord, imparting to them, and through them to others, the fruit of Redemption, viz.: sanctification. The preparation for this holy season is Easter; it ends with the last Sunday after Pentecost.

This third part of the Ecclesiastical Year reminds us, therefore, of the infinite love of *God the Holy Ghost*, who imparted to man the fruits of Redemption, decreed by *God the Father*, and accomplished by *God the Son*, thereby making it His sanctifying agent upon earth.

In connection with these three principal parts of the Ecclesiastical Year, we have one other, in which is presented to us, in living examples, the fruits of Redemption and Sanctification. This fourth part includes:

4. *The Feasts of the Saints*,—that is, of those glorious servants of God, who in their lives faithfully made use of the means of salvation left by our Saviour, thereby becoming partakers of the heavenly glory of Christ, of whose Church they were living and effective members.

The Ecclesiastical Year can again be divided in a different manner, by bringing before us the events of each day of the whole year, of which there are some of greater, some of lesser importance. The most important of these holy days are:

1. *Sunday*, called, in the language of the Church, the day of the Lord. The usage of keeping holy one day in each week, sanctifying it with good works, especially remembering on that day our higher destiny did not originate first with Christianity; it is coeval with mankind, and introduced by the Creator Himself, immediately after having created the world. This is fully explained in Genesis 2: 2, 3. "And on the seventh day God ended His work, which He had made; and He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had done; and God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it." To understand the meaning of these words, and especially of the Sabbath, sanctified by the Creator Himself, it must be remarked that by the word *day* in this and other places of the Bible where there is mention made of the creation, is not meant the period of twenty-four hours, as we commonly express it: just as if God had created each part of the world in six consecutive days, each twenty-four hours long, and then rested on the seventh day from all His works for twenty-four hours, as man does at the present day. Such an opinion would be wrong for this reason alone, because before God, the Eternal, the Immutable, no change of time exists, no Past, no Future, but only a never-ending Present, according to St. Augustin; whatever therefore, has been, is, and shall be done, is at one and the same time before Him. The word *day* has rather a different meaning in the Holy Scriptures: it is often used to indicate a period of long duration; the days of the eternal and infinite God are not like the days of mortal men. In this sense the Royal Prophet David says: "A thousand years in thy sight are as yesterday, which is past; and as a watch in the night." Psalm 89: 4. In the same manner St. Peter expresses himself, saying: "One day with the Lord is as a thousand years,



and a thousand years as one day." 2 Peter, 3 : 8. According to the Holy Scriptures and the interpretations of some of the most learned doctors of the Church of the early centuries, as Origenes, Athanasius and Augustin, by the six days of the creation are understood as many successive periods of an unknown, but certainly long duration, in which God made and placed in order the different classes of creation. Exactly in accordance with this interpretation of the six days of the creation is that of the seventh day, on which God ended his work, rested from it, and sanctified it; by the Sabbath, or the Day of the Lord, therefore, we do not understand a day twenty-four hours long, but a space of time corresponding with the former six periods which commenced after the creation, and has not yet ceased, but still continues, and will continue, until it merges into the great eternal Sabbath or day of rest, which the Elect will enjoy in the kingdom of heaven with their Creator, after their work on earth is ended.

After the example Almighty God had given to keep holy the Sabbath-day, it follows that the true servants of God, even in the earliest times, when the natural law existed, that is to say, from Adam to Moses observed that day by resting from their labor, and sanctifying it by good works. Afterwards, when God with his chosen people, the Israelites, in the time of Moses, ended the so-called old law, giving them for this end His commandments on Mount Sinai, prescribing certain rules whereby they should worship Him in their different states of life. He gave them in the third commandment positive precepts how to keep holy the Sabbath-day, saying: "Remember that thou keep holy the Sabbath-day; six days shalt thou labor, and shalt do all thy works. But on the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God; thou shalt do no work on it, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, nor thy man-servant, nor thy maid-servant, nor thy beast, nor the stranger that is within thy gates; for in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, and the sea, and all things that are in them, and rested on the seventh day; therefore the Lord blessed the seventh day and sanctified it." (Exodus, 20 : 8-11.)

The same commandments God confirmed and explained more fully on different occasions.

In accordance with this command of God, the Sabbath-day was strictly kept by the Jewish people, principally by abstaining from servile work (except in case of necessity), and by special religious ceremonies. Each desecration was looked upon as apostasy, and was punished with death like idolatry. The Sabbath commenced on Friday evening at the setting of the sun, and lasted until the evening of the Sabbath itself, when the stars appeared in the firmament.

Our Saviour and His Apostles also kept holy the Sabbath as long as Judaism had not lost its significance; and when we see that the enemies of our Saviour, the Pharisees and doctors of the law, often reproached Him for not sanctifying that day, it was only done because the Jews, at that time, observed the commandments of God, especially the third, only according to the *letter*, not caring for

its real meaning or true signification, whilst our Lord, in the observance of the commandments, especially of the third, pointed to the *spirit* in accordance with the one great command of loving God and our neighbor, by His doctrine as well as by His example.

At the expiration of the old law, and with the beginning and spreading of the Church of Christ, of which the old law was only a figure, a great change took place. The sanctification of one day in the week, decreed by Almighty God for all future time, had to be retained; but instead of the *last* day of the week, the *first* was to be observed. This change was made already by the Apostles, according to the power they had received from our Saviour—to bind and to loose—that is, to give directions and regulations for the Faithful, and, if necessary, to change or abolish them. Important reasons, however, caused this change; as the *last* day of the week was sanctified after the creation in a higher degree, the *first* day was kept holy after the Resurrection, since the most important events of history, the Resurrection of our Lord, the Descent of the Holy Ghost, and, according to the traditions of several doctors of the Church, the Birth of Christ, His Circumcision and Baptism occurred on that day, which was called by the Faithful “the day of the Lord,” and as such observed even in the time of the Apostles, before the Sabbath of the Jews was abolished, and the law, to sanctify the first day of the week promulgated. This change was necessary, so that the Christians should outwardly be distinguished from the Jews; and it was done by publicly sanctifying another day, instead of the Jewish Sabbath. Many, however, that were converted from Judaism to Christianity observed still the old Sabbath—but this usage disappeared more and more, until it ceased entirely in the second and third centuries. The Fathers of the Church insisted upon this entire change. St. Ignatius, a disciple of SS. Peter, Paul and John, writes thus to the Christians of Magnesia:—“If you are Christians, observe no more the Sabbath, but sanctify the day of the Lord; for through Him and His death we received life.” The day of the Lord in the earliest times of Christianity, was also called Sunday, a Pagan term, because the Pagans had dedicated Sunday to the God of the Sun, and hence the word Sunday. The Christians adopted this name, because they looked upon Christ as the Sun of Justice, according to St. Ambrose, saying: “The day of the Lord is venerable to us, and solemn, because our Saviour shone in the light of the Resurrection like the rising sun, after having destroyed the darkness of hell; therefore this day is called by the children of the world Sunday, because Christ, the rising sun of Justice, shines upon it.”

The Christian writers in the first century used the name Sunday instead of the day of the Lord, in order to be understood by the Pagans in their instructions to them, and in their defence of the Christian doctrine; for the word Sunday is only used in their letters directed to the Pagans, whilst the Christians, in their sermons and writings amongst themselves, always called it the day of the

Lord. Every Christian, if not detained by sickness or imprisonment, was obliged to attend divine service on Sunday; to neglect it was a grievous sin, often punished with excommunication. According to the second precept of the Church, this obligation still exists for all the Faithful to be present at the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, Sermon, and Catechism. Sunday is kept holy in the new, as it was in the old Law, by abstaining from all servile labor, to which belong all professional employments of man, whatever his state of life. All public and state affairs are suspended on that day, domestic labor only is permitted; any accident or very urgent business are reasons, however, for exemption from this precept, according to the words of our Saviour, saying: "The Sabbath was made for man and not man for the Sabbath." Mark, 2: 27.

Worldly pleasures also were formerly forbidden on Sunday; the joy of the faithful on such a day should be spiritual, therefore works of piety—giving alms and visiting the sick—were practiced on that day.

After Sunday the most important days of the Ecclesiastical Year are:

2. *The Feasts*, days of joy in memory of some happy event. We find such days among the Pagans. God himself appointed them amongst the Jews, as the feasts of Easter, Pentecost and the Tabernacle, and hence the Catholic Church has the right, according to the power given her by Christ, to institute *Feasts*, and to oblige her children to keep them. By *Feasts*, therefore, we understand days set apart by the Church, in honor of some important event in the history of Redemption, or in memory of some saintly person.

The Feasts are therefore divided, according to their origin and meaning, into:

a. *Feasts of the Lord*, in commemoration of the most important events in the life of our Lord, and

b. *Feasts of the Saints*, in commemoration of holy persons; and are subdivided into

aa. *Feasts of the Blessed Virgin and Mother of God*, and

bb. *Feasts of other Saints*.

All the Feasts at present existing in the Catholic Church were not instituted at the commencement of Christianity, for the Feasts of the Saints could not be celebrated until after their death; but the Feasts of the Lord and the Blessed Virgin were celebrated in the very beginning of the Church, although without any special command, as the Nativity, Epiphany, and Resurrection of our Lord, the Immaculate Conception and Assumption of the Blessed Virgin.

The celebration of these Feasts and their ceremonies were perfected by degrees, as the power of the Church could be developed only at the end of the persecution, and the beginning of the liberty of the Church.

According to their importance the Feasts are also divided into double Feasts of the first and second class, and into double and simple Feasts. The greatest Festivals have an octave, that is, the celebration is not confined to one day, but is prolonged through a period of eight days.



Some Feasts are *movable* and others *immovable*. The immovable Feasts are always celebrated on the same day of the year, the movable ones, however, can be changed.

The movable Feasts are "Easter," and all the Feasts connected with it.

Easter is always celebrated on the first Sunday after the full moon, following the Spring Equinox, (21st of March) and it so happens that it sometimes occurs in March and sometimes in April. All the other Feasts are immovable.

With the Feasts are connected also :

3. *Vigils*, meaning "watches during the night." The Pagans had vigils, celebrating the whole night preceding a Festival, in honor of their gods. The same custom existed amongst the Jews, praying to God during the night. Thus says the royal prophet David in his 118th Psalm, 62d verse :

"I rose at midnight to give praise to Thee; for the judgments of Thy justification."

And in Psalm 133d, 2d verse : "In the nights lift up your hands to the holy places, and bless ye the Lord."

The Christians in the time of the Apostles met during the night preceding a great Festival in the church, and prayed and sung there, preparing themselves for the coming Festival. This beautiful custom, however, was after a time abused, and the night services, in consequence, were discontinued, and in its place fasting and prayer were ordered as a suitable preparation for the coming holy days.

By the word *Vigil* we mean at present, in the language of the Church, a whole day preceding a Festival.

Important days in the Ecclesiastical Year are also :

4. The days of Fast and Abstinence, on which is commanded either a partial abstinence from food, or a total abstinence from the use of flesh-meat, or both together. Besides the vigils, the week-days of Advent were formerly fast-days, as are at present the week-days of Lent. Then come the *Ember* days, which fall on the Wednesdays, Fridays and Saturdays of the four seasons of the year. It is not certain why they were introduced. Some ecclesiastical writers say that they were instituted to counteract the excesses committed by the Pagans during the changes of the seasons of the year, and again, to implore the assistance of God, and to thank Him for all blessings received from Him at the different seasons of the year, and in a special manner to sanctify the changes of the seasons by fasting and prayer.

The Ember days are also set apart for the ordination of Priests; the Faithful, therefore, should beg of God, by fasting and praying, to give worthy ministers to His Church. Days of abstinence (which were in the early ages of the Church days of fast) are all the Fridays of the year. The rest of the week-days of the Ecclesiastical Year, upon which there are no Feasts, are called

5. *Ferias*—*Feria* signifies the day of rest,—originally such days were ap-

pointed for divine service, and all labor was forbidden. At the present time, however, it has a very different meaning.

In the language of the Church, therefore, Monday is the second Feria, Tuesday, the third, &c., &c. At the Ferias the Mass of the preceding Sunday is read.

Some Ferias have a special meaning and a Mass of their own, as the week-days of Advent, Lent, the Ember-days and the Rogation-days. There are also so-called "greater Ferias:" as Ash Wednesday and the days in Holy Week, which exclude the celebration of even the greatest Feasts.

# FIRST PART

## OF THE ECCLESIASTICAL YEAR.

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### CHRISTMAS-CYCLE.

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#### THE HOLY SEASON OF ADVENT.

THE ecclesiastical year commences with Advent, which means *the Coming*, and the season of Advent is so called because it is instituted as a time of preparation for the Feast of the Incarnation and Birth of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ, and of His gracious coming upon earth.

Advent has, however, in the Catholic Church, a two-fold meaning. It first recalls to our mind the period of expectation in the old law, which preceded the real Advent of our Saviour on earth; secondly, it is to us a time of preparation for the spiritual Advent of Christ, which, in the Catholic Church, we celebrate every year upon Christmas.

The holy season of Advent is therefore

1. *A Time of Commemoration.* When our first parents violated the commandment of God, they brought misery and ruin not only upon themselves, but also upon all their posterity, because according to the Holy Scriptures, "Death passed upon all men, in whom all have sinned." (Rom. 5: 12.) God, notwithstanding, revealed His infinite love and mercy to mankind in the most conclusive manner, for He desired to save fallen man from eternal perdition, and to give him the hope of accomplishing his original destiny, eternal happiness in heaven. For that end He sent His only-begotten Son into the world, to atone by His sacrifice, suffering and death on the Cross for the sins of mankind, reconciling them with Himself and His heavenly Father, and restoring to them their lost inheritance, the grace and friendship of God. "For God so loved the world, as to give His only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him, may not perish, but may have life everlasting." John 3: 16.

Even to our first parents God promised after their fall a Redeemer, saying to the serpent, the wicked deceiver, by whose malice the fall of man was accomplished: "I will put enmities between thee and the woman, and thy seed and her seed: she shall crush thy head, and thou shalt lie in wait for her heel." Genesis 3: 15. By the word "woman" is understood, according to the Holy Scriptures, the Blessed Virgin Mary, and by the seed her divine Son, the promised Saviour, Jesus Christ, who would destroy the power of the devil and his dominion over man. This promise, however, was not to be fulfilled until after a long period of expectation. Man had to feel the degradation and misery into which he had fallen by sin, and the evil consequences of sin. He had to feel his own weakness and helplessness in regard to his salvation, and the necessity of assistance and salvation through God, and therefore a sincere desire for heavenly assistance and for the promised Redeemer had to be awakened within him. At the same time, fallen man had to be prepared in manifold ways for the reception of the Saviour, and for a participation in the fruits of Redemption. This time of expectation lasted 4000 years—a long and sad period, for Heaven had been closed by sin, so that none could enter. Sin and God's wrath weighed heavily upon man; the sad consequences of the first sin were more fully developed—obscurity of the understanding, impotency to do good, and sinful inclinations being the results; so that ignorance, superstition and even idolatry, with its wicked accompaniments of every species, increased from day to day, and there was no one who could remedy the evil, or draw man from his degraded condition, and elevate him to his original dignity. God, however, consoled man from time to time, by means of revelations which He communicated to him through His chosen servants, the Patriarchs and Prophets, during the time of expectation, but especially by renewing His first promise of a Redeemer, upon which nearly all the prophecies of the old law were founded, and whose life and death were foretold by inspired men, many centuries before His coming. By these continued revelations and repeated promises of a Redeemer, not only the true knowledge of God, the true belief in Him, and the expectation of a Redeemer, were preserved, among at least one portion of mankind, the chosen people of Israel, but the desire also for redemption and salvation through Him. How beautifully does Isaiah, the Prophet, express the desire of man for a Redeemer, saying: "Drop down dew, ye heavens, from above, and let the clouds rain the just: let the earth be opened, and bud forth a Saviour." Isaiah, 45: 8.

It was at the same time the duty of the divine messenger to prepare man worthily for the Advent of the Redeemer, and hence the Prophets of the old law, to the last and greatest of all, who "came to prepare the way of the Lord," exhorted man to penance and amendment, to the faithful observance of God's commandments and to a becoming reception of the Saviour.

It is the desire of the Catholic Church to remind us every year, during the four weeks of Advent of the 4000 years of Jewish expectation, to consider the



infinite love and mercy of our heavenly Father which He manifested in the sending of a Redeemer, and in His manifold decrees for the salvation of man through so many hundreds of years, and as our forefathers were filled with a longing desire for the promised Saviour, so should we be grateful to Him who long ago fulfilled His promise, sent into the world a Redeemer, and applied so abundantly to us the fruits of Redemption;—therefore does the Priest read during Advent, in the canonical hours, many passages of the prophecies of Isaiah, because he announced to the Jewish people the most important prophecies of the coming Saviour.

The holy season of Advent is

2. *A Time of Preparation.* As our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ, in the fulness of time became man to accomplish the work of Redemption, so He desires to come again every Christmas in a spiritual manner and, according to the language of the Church, to enter into our hearts, to be re-born, as it were, in us in a spiritual manner, and to make us partakers of the fruits of Redemption. The holy season of Advent should therefore be to us what the time of expectation was to the Jews, a time of desire for the spiritual coming of Christ, and of a worthy preparation for Christmas, at which time we celebrate His spiritual Advent. The holy season of Advent is, therefore, like Lent, a time of penance, mortification, prayer, and meditation. During this time, if no Festival occurs, the vestments worn by the Priest at the altar are of a violet color, meaning sorrow, and the *Gloria in excelsis* is not said.

In former times, if not every day, at least three days in the week were kept as fast-days, and all public amusements were prohibited. Besides the holy season of Advent commenced sooner, lasting over forty days; in consequence of which the early writers of the Church called it a second Lent.

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## FIRST SUNDAY IN ADVENT.

This day, the first of the Ecclesiastical Year, is of special importance, and belongs to the five principal Sundays, which excludes the celebration of even the greatest Festivals.

INTROIT OF THE MASS.—Ps. 24.

“To thee, O Lord, have I lifted up my soul. In thee, O my God, I put my trust. Let me not be ashamed. Neither let my enemies laugh at me; for none of them that wait on thee shall be confounded.

“Shew, O Lord, thy ways to me, and teach me thy paths.”

Glory be to the Father, &c.

vol. I.—2.

This prayer of the royal Prophet for God's assistance, is full of devotion and confidence, and very appropriately expresses the desire of Christians at this holy season, for light and salvation through the promised Saviour.

PRAYER.

"Stir up thy might, we beseech thee, O Lord, and come, that by thy protection we may deserve to be delivered from the threatening dangers of our sins, and by thy deliverance be saved. Who livest and reignest with God the Father in the unity of the Holy Ghost, world without end. Amen."

EPISTLE.—Romans, 13: 11-14.

"Brethren, knowing the time, that it is now the hour for us to rise from sleep; for now our salvation is nearer than when we believed. The night is passed and the day is at hand; let us, therefore, cast off the works of darkness, and put on the armor of light; let us walk honestly, as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and impurities, not in contention and envy; but put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ."

How admirably adapted and full of meaning is this short exhortation of the Apostle for the first Sunday in Advent. It contains abundant matter for earnest meditation and moral practice, and therefore serves us as an excellent preparation for Christmas.

GOSPEL.—Luke 21: 25-33.

"At that time Jesus said to his disciples: There shall be signs in the sun and in the moon and in the stars; and upon the earth distress of nations, by reason of the confusion of the roaring of the sea and of the waves: men withering away for fear and expectation of what shall come upon the whole world. For the powers of heaven shall be moved; and then they shall see the Son of man coming in a cloud with great power and majesty. But when these things begin to come to pass, look up and lift up your heads: because your redemption is at hand. And he spoke to them a similitude. See the fig-tree, and all the trees; when they now shoot forth their fruit, you know that summer is nigh; so you also, when you shall see these things come to pass, know that the Kingdom of God is at hand. Amen I say to you, this generation shall not pass away, till all things be fulfilled. Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away."

The Church presents to us in this Gospel another Advent of the Son of God—His coming on the Last Day—and begs us, by penance and amendment, to prepare ourselves worthily for the gracious Advent of Christ, and to receive Him with such dispositions that we may become partakers of the fruits of the

Redemption and not be confounded at His coming on the day of Judgment. For the same Saviour who has redeemed the world shall judge the world, and reward those who, by a virtuous life, became partakers of the fruits of the Redemption, and punish those who, by sin, made themselves unworthy of them; the Saviour has said: "Neither doth the Father judge any man, but hath given all judgment to the Son, that all men may honor the Son, as they honor the Father." John 5: 22, 23. St. Augustine says: "He shall be the Judge, who stood before the judge; He shall condemn the guilty who was condemned innocently. It is just that those see the Judge who are to be judged, but those to be judged are the good and the wicked; it is, therefore, necessary that, to the good and to the wicked, the form of a *servant* should be shown; the form of *God*, however, will be seen by the good alone."

Meditating on the terrible day of judgment should fill us with a greater fear of sin, and incite us to do penance and amend our lives, especially when we remember the words of the holy Scriptures:—"That the time when this day shall come, has never been revealed to mortal." Our Saviour verifies this, by saying to his disciples: "But of that day and hour, no one knoweth; no, not the angels of heaven, but the Father alone." (Matthew 24: 36; Mark 13: 32.) Not only is it uncertain when the day of judgment will come, but even the day upon which we will die, that day which decides our destiny for eternity. "Watch ye, therefore, because you know not what hour your Lord will come." (Matthew 24: 42.)

Therefore, the wise man admonishes us to remember our end (death, judgment, heaven, and hell), to avoid evil, and to prepare for death: for as it is written—"In all thy works remember thy last end, and thou shalt sin no more." (Ecclesiasticus 7: 40.) St. Augustine says: "What do you care, *when* the day of judgment comes? Live as if it would soon come, and you will have nothing to fear; for as your last day finds you, so will *you* find the last day:—as you die, so shall you be judged." St. Jerome also says: "Beloved brethren, meditate seriously upon the last day, amend your lives, reform your morals, overcome evil temptations, and repent of your sins in tears and sorrow; for *then* only can you meet without fear the eternal Judge, if you *now* anticipate His severe judgments by having a salutary dread of sin."

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## SECOND SUNDAY IN ADVENT.

INTROIT OF THE MASS.—Isaiah 30.

"People of Sion, behold the Lord shall come to save the nations; and the Lord shall make the glory of his voice to be heard in the joy of your heart.



Give ear, O thou that rulest Israel, thou that leadest Joseph like a sheep. Glory be to the Father," &c.

These words, in which the prophet announced to the Jews the coming of the Messiah, exhort us to implore with the Royal Prophet, the assistance of Almighty God, the kind Ruler of his people.

PRAYER.

"Stir up our hearts, O Lord, to prepare the ways of thy only-begotten Son; that by His coming we may be worthy to serve thee with purified minds. Who livest and reignest," &c.

EPISTLE.—Romans 15 : 4-13.

"Brethren, what things soever were written, were written for our learning; that through patience and the comfort of the Scriptures, we might have hope. Now, the God of patience and of comfort grant you to be of one mind, one towards another, according to Jesus Christ; that with one mind, and with one mouth, you may glorify God and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Wherefore receive one another, as Christ also has received you, unto the honor of God. For I say that Christ Jesus was minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made unto the fathers. But that the Gentiles are to glorify God for his mercy, as it is written: Therefore, will I confess to thee, O Lord, among the Gentiles, and will sing to thy name. And again he saith: Rejoice, ye Gentiles, with his people. And again: Praise the Lord all ye Gentiles; and magnify him, all ye people. And again Isaiah saith: There shall be a root of Jesse; and he that shall rise up to rule the Gentiles, in him the Gentiles shall hope. Now, the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing; that you may abound in hope, and in the power of the Holy Ghost."

The Apostle reminds Christians that Jesus Christ came into this world for all—Jews and Gentiles—that both in like manner were called upon to be sharers in His heavenly kingdom. They should, therefore, lay aside all their enmities, and praise with one accord the goodness and mercy of God. Of no less importance is the lesson of the Apostle to us, in which we are told, that we belong to those for whom the Son of God came into this world, and whom He called to be partakers of His kingdom.

GOSPEL.—Matthew 11 : 2-10.

"At that time, when John had heard in prison the works of Christ; sending two of his disciples he said to him: Art thou he that art to come, or do we look for another? And Jesus making answer, said to them: Go and relate to

John what you have heard and seen. The blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead rise again, the poor have the gospel preached to them; and blessed is he that shall not be scandalized in me. And when they went their way, Jesus began to say to the multitudes, concerning John: What went you out into the desert to see? a reed shaken with the wind? But what went you out to see? a man clothed in soft garments? Behold, they that are clothed in soft garments are in the houses of kings. But what went you out to see? a prophet? Yea, I tell you, and more than a prophet. For this is he of whom it is written: Behold, I send my angel before thy face, who shall prepare thy way before thee."

The words of our Saviour, "And blessed is he that shall not be scandalized in me," contains a warning to the disciples of St. John, and to the Jews present, to overcome their prejudices, in order not to be deprived of the fruits of redemption. We must also apply them to ourselves, and "take heed that we are not scandalized in Him or in His doctrine."

The praise which our Saviour bestowed upon St. John, shows plainly that this great prophet entertained no doubt concerning the sacred mission of our Lord Jesus Christ, and at the same time, points out to us those virtues by which men become truly great; and as we see and venerate them in the greatest of all the prophets—the precursor of the Messiah—so also should we imitate them, thus becoming worthy followers of Christ.

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### THIRD SUNDAY IN ADVENT.

INTROIT OF THE MASS.—Philippians 4.

"Rejoice in the Lord always; again, I say, rejoice. Let your modesty be known to all men. The Lord is nigh. Be nothing solicitous, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, let your petitions be made known to God. Lord, thou hast blessed thy land, thou hast turned away the captivity of Jacob. Glory be to the Father," &c.

These words contain, in reference to the liberation of mankind, through Christ, from the servitude of Satan (of which the deliverance of the Jews from Babylonian captivity was the type), an exhortation to rejoice in all modesty, having confidence in God, as the time of the coming of the Lord approaches.

#### PRAYER.

"We beseech thee, O Lord, incline thine ear to our prayers, and enlighten the darkness of our mind by the grace of thy visitations. Who livest and reignest," &c.

## EPISTLE.—Philippians 4 : 4-7.

“Brethren, rejoice in the Lord always ; again, I say, rejoice. Let your modesty be known to all men. The Lord is nigh. Be nothing solicitous, but in everything, by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, let your petitions be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasseth all understanding, keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

Nearly the whole of this epistle is contained in the Introit, the church desiring to impress upon our minds the beautiful counsel of the Apostle, who understands by the words, “Rejoice in the Lord,” the only joy worthy of a Christian ; the being called to the true belief, the hope of salvation, and the justification and remission of sins. This joy will have no end ; for, according to St. Chrysostom, “None can lose that joy who rejoices in the Lord, whatever may befall them ; all other joys are perishable, and cannot dispel sadness ; the fear of God, however, effects all things ; it produces such joy that no misfortune can take it from us. He that fears God and trusts in Him, has found the root of joy and possesses all the sources of happiness. Like a drop of water falling into the sea, and disappearing at once, so are all the evils of a good man destroyed.” The peace of God which “surpasseth all understanding,” is our reconciliation with God the Father, through His divine Son—peace of conscience—peace and harmony among men. It was this threefold peace which the angels announced at the birth of the Saviour—“and on earth peace to men of good will.” It was this peace which He gave to His disciples, saying : “Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you ; not as the world giveth, do I give unto you.” (John 14 : 27.)

## GOSPEL.—John 1 : 19-28.

“At that time, the Jews sent from Jerusalem priests and Levites to John, to ask him: Who art thou ? And he confessed, and did not deny ; and he confessed, I am not the Christ. And they asked him: What then ? Art thou Elias ? And he said, I am not. Art thou the prophet ? And he answered, No. They said therefore unto him: Who art thou, that we may give an answer to them that sent us ? What sayest thou of thyself ? He said, I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness: Make straight the way of the Lord, as said the prophet Isaiah. And they that were sent, were of the Pharisees. And they asked him, and said to him: Why, then, dost thou baptize, if thou be not Christ, nor Elias, nor the prophet ? John answered them, saying: I baptize with water ; but there hath stood one in the midst of you, whom you know not ; the same is he that shall come after me, who is preferred before me, the latchet of whose shoe I am not worthy to loose. These things were done in Bethania, beyond the Jordan, where John was baptizing.”

The Gospel of this Sunday draws our attention to the life and deeds of St. John the Baptist who preceded our Lord, in order to make ready his way, by



preaching the baptism of penance for the remission of sins, and to prepare the people for a worthy reception of Him. We should also be mindful of the earnest preaching of St. John the Baptist, especially in the holy season of Advent, and prepare ourselves in a becoming manner for the spiritual coming of Christ.

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## FOURTH SUNDAY IN ADVENT.

INTROIT OF THE MASS.—Isaiah 45.

“Drop down dew, ye heavens, from above, and let the clouds rain the just ; let the earth be opened, and bud forth a Saviour.

“The heavens show forth the glory of God and the firmament declareth the work of his hands. Glory be to the Father,” &c.

Isaiah expresses in these words the longing of the Jews for the real Advent of the Redeemer. The desire of Christians can also be expressed in the same words. At the same time the royal prophet rejoices and praises God for the approaching coming of His only-begotten Son into the world.

### PRAYER.

“Stir up thy might, we beseech thee, O Lord, and come ; and succor us with great power ; that by the help of thy grace the indulgence of thy mercy may accelerate what our sins impede. Who livest,” &c.

EPISTLE. —1 Cor. 4 : 1–5.

“Brethren, let a man so account of us as of the ministers of Christ, and the dispensers of the mysteries of God. Here now it is required among the dispensers that a man be found faithful. But to me it is a very small thing to be judged by you or by man’s day ; but neither do I judge my own self. For I am not conscious to myself of anything, yet am I not hereby justified ; but he that judgeth me, is the Lord. Therefore judge not before the time, until the Lord come ; who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts ; and then shall every man have praise from God.”

The exhortation of the Apostle, to respect Priests as the “dispensers of the mysteries of God,” is to be particularly remarked on this Sunday, because on the Ember-days of the preceding week Priests are ordained. The faithful should, therefore, remember the dignity of the Catholic priesthood, and respect them accordingly. The Epistle, at the same time, speaks of the approaching

judgment, when our Lord shall reveal the most secret thoughts, desires, words and deeds of men, and every one receive his reward or punishment, and if St. Paul confesses "that he is not justified, although not conscious of anything," who can presume to justify himself through self-esteem or pride? Who, on the contrary, should not be filled with holy fear, when he considers the weakness of human nature, and, according to the admonition of the Apostle, "work out his salvation in fear and trembling." Philip. 2: 12.

GOSPEL.—Luke 3: 1--6.

"In the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Cæsar, Pontius Pilate being governor of Judea, and Herod being tetrarch of Galilee, and Philip, his brother, tetrarch of Iturea and the country of Trachonitis, and Lysanias, tetrarch of Abilina, under the High-priests Annas and Caiphas; the word of the Lord came to John, the son of Zachary, in the desert. And he came into all the country about the Jordan, preaching the baptism of penance for the remission of sins; as it was written in the book of the sayings of Isaiah the prophet: A voice of one crying in the wilderness: Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight his paths. Every valley shall be filled; and every mountain and hill shall be brought low; the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough ways plain; and all flesh shall see the salvation of God."

This Gospel, like that of the third Sunday in Advent, speaks of the works of St. John the Baptist. The Evangelist describes thus minutely the spiritual and temporal rulers of that time, because, according to the prophecy of Jacob, the sceptre was taken from Juda at the coming of the Prince of Peace. In contrast to the many kinds of purifications necessary in the old law, the Evangelist calls the baptism of St. John, "the baptism for the remission of sins," not as if by its sins were forgiven, but, that by it men were called upon to do penance; for by it alone could they obtain forgiveness for their sins.

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## THE VIGIL OF CHRISTMAS.

(December 24.)

INTROIT OF THE MASS.—Exod. 16: 6, 7.

"This day you shall know that the Lord will come and save us, and in the morning you shall see his glory. The earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof; the world, and all they that dwell therein. (Ps. 23: 1.) Glory be to the Father," &c.

The church proposes very appropriately to Christians these words of the Prophet, that they may always remember the glory of God as did the Jews of old—and His love and mercy, revealed to them through His Incarnation and Birth.

## PRAYER.

“O God, who givest us joy by the annual expectation of our redemption, grant that we may securely see Him coming as our judge, whom we joyfully receive as our Redeemer, our Lord Jesus Christ thy Son, who livest,” &c.

## EPISTLE.—Rom. 1: 1-6.

“Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated unto the Gospel of God, which he had promised before by his prophets in the Holy Scriptures, concerning his Son, who was made to him of the seed of David according to the flesh, who was predestinated the Son of God in power according to the spirit of sanctification, by the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ from the dead, by whom we have received grace and apostleship, for obedience to the faith in all nations for his name, among whom are you also the called of Jesus Christ.”

The Church refers, in these words of the great Apostle, to the incomprehensible decree of divine love, by which His only-begotten Son, Jesus Christ came into this world, to lead us to eternal life, by our willingly believing in His holy name. St. Thomas truly says, “Submission, obedience, and good-will are necessary for belief, for when the Lord becomes the teacher we must never question, but accept.”

## GOSPEL.—Matt. 1: 18-21.

“When Mary the mother of Jesus, was espoused to Joseph, before they came together she was found with child of the Holy Ghost: whereupon, Joseph, her husband, being a just man, and not willing publicly to expose her, was minded to put her away privately. But while he thought on these things, behold the angel of the Lord appeared to him in his sleep, saying, Joseph, son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost. And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name Jesus. For he shall save his people from their sins.”

When St. Joseph became the husband of Mary, he knew nothing of the great mystery of the Incarnation taking place within her, but it was revealed to him by an angel sent from Heaven, which greatly consoled this holy man, and from that time until the birth of her Divine Son, he watched over and respected the Virgin Mother of God.

On the eve of Christmas, it is customary among Christians to have a Christmas-tree, ornamented with golden fruits, presents, and many burning lights, and



to gather around it, to the joy and delight of the children, to whom the gifts are then presented. This beautiful custom is full of meaning; as by a tree our first parents brought ruin upon man, so by a tree was the salvation of man accomplished, for upon the tree of the cross the Son of man suffered and died. The tree of the cross, of which the tree of life standing in the garden of Paradise was the figure, is represented by the evergreen Christmas-tree, at the same time it is also an emblem of Him who gave us life from the tree of the cross, and who was announced to us by the Prophet as "a rod out of the root of Jesse," who was the father of David, the ancestor of Christ, according to His humanity. The *golden fruits* of the Christmas-tree signify, in contrast to the fruits of the forbidden tree, which brought disgrace and death upon man, the *blessed fruits of the cross*, by which man received the grace of God, gained His friendship and life eternal. The *burning lights* of the Christmas-tree represent the heavenly light, which is Christ coming upon earth, filling the world with light, until then full of the darkness of sin and infidelity. The Christmas presents with which the hearts of old and young are gladdened, remind us of the magnificent gifts which our Heavenly Father has bestowed upon His children.

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## NATIVITY OF OUR LORD, OR CHRISTMAS.

(December 25.)

This Feast, the greatest of the Ecclesiastical Year, is justly called the Festival of Festivals: it reminds us of the fulfilment of the prophecies, and of the birth of Christ, who was the expectation of all nations, who redeemed the world and made men His brethren, children of God, and heirs of heaven.

"The Feast approaching," says St. Chrysostom, "should fill us with veneration and holy awe, and he would not err, who should call it the mother of all Festivals. What Festival is it? The birth of Christ in the flesh, and from it Epiphany, Easter, Ascension and Pentecost derive their origin." Extraordinary privileges are attached to this great Festival, it has not only an octave, but its celebration continues until the 6th Sunday after Epiphany. If Christmas falls upon Friday, the use of flesh-meat is allowed, because it is a season of joy to all Christians. A third privilege belonging exclusively to Christmas is, that on that day, every priest says three masses, in honor of the three births of the Saviour, His eternal birth in the bosom of His Heavenly Father, His temporal birth, in the fulness of time, of the ever Blessed Virgin Mary, and his spiritual birth in the hearts of men.

## INTROIT OF THE FIRST MASS.—Ps. 2.

“The Lord hath said to me ; thou art my son, this day have I begotten thee. Why have the Gentiles raged, and the people devised vain things? Glory be to the Father,” &c.

These words recall to our minds the *eternal* birth of Christ, against whom the Gentiles still rage in vain.

## PRAYER.

“O God, who hast made this most holy night shine forth with the brightness of the true light, grant, we beseech thee, that we may enjoy his happiness in heaven, the mystery of whose light we have known upon earth. Who livest,” &c.

## EPISTLE.—Titus 2 : 11-15.

“Dearly beloved, the grace of God our Saviour, hath appeared to all men, instructing us, that denying ungodliness and worldly desires, we should live soberly, and justly, and godly in this world, looking for the blessed hope and coming of the glory of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and might cleanse to himself a people acceptable, a pursuer of good works. These things speak and exhort, in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

By these words of the Epistle, the Church reminds us of the infinite love, which the Son of God has shown to us, through His Incarnation, thereby redeeming us and making us His chosen people ; at the same time we are taught, how to become worthy of the promises of Christ. The holy Pope Leo the Great says, “Let us thank God, the Father, *through His Son in the Holy Ghost*, who in His infinite love had mercy on us, and as we were dead in sin, brought us to life in Christ, so that in Him we may be created anew.”

## GOSPEL OF THE FIRST MASS.—Luke 2 : 1-14.

“At that time there went forth a decree from Cæsar Augustus, that the whole world should be enrolled. This enrolling was first made by Cyrenus the governor of Syria. And all went to be enrolled, every one into his own city. And Joseph also went up from Galilee out of the city of Nazareth into Judea, the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and family of David, to be enrolled with Mary, his espoused wife, who was with child. And it came to pass, that when they were there, her days were accomplished that she should be delivered ; and she brought forth her first-born son, and wrapped him up in swaddling-clothes, and laid him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn. And there were in the same country shepherds watching and keeping the night-watches over their flock. And behold,

an angel of the Lord stood by them, and the brightness of God shone round about them, and they feared with a great fear. And the angel said to them: Fear not; for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, that shall be to all the people; for this day is born to you a Saviour, who is Christ the Lord, in the city of David. And this shall be a sign unto you: You shall find the infant wrapped in swaddling-clothes, and laid in a manger. And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly army, praising God, and saying: Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men of good will."

In these simple, but not less sublime and touching words, the Evangelist records the birth of the Son of God, and all the important circumstances attending it. Even the time pointed out by the Evangelist, agrees in a wonderful manner with the coming of the expected Saviour, for, as had not been the case for many centuries, universal peace reigned upon earth, so that the world cleansed from the curse of war, and adorned with the palm of peace, could receive its Lord and King, who, as Prince of Peace, brought heavenly peace to men.

In obedience to the decree of the Roman Emperor, Mary and Joseph went from Nazareth where they lived, to Bethlehem, there to be enrolled. The time appointed for Mary to bring forth her Divine Son had come, and the prophecy of Michæas was fulfilled: "And thou, Bethlehem Ephrata, art a little one among the thousands of Judea; out of thee shall he come forth unto me, that is to be the ruler in Israel, and his going forth is from the beginning, from the days of eternity."

Thus we see a pagan emperor unwittingly assisting in the fulfillment of the prophecy of the birth-place of the Son of God.

According to the interpretations of sacred writers, the name of the city, Bethlehem, is full of signification. Gregory the Great says, "He was born in Bethlehem," which means "the house of bread," for He has said, "I am the living bread which came down from heaven." (John 6: 51.) The birth-place of our Lord, therefore, was called the house of bread, because He would there appear in the flesh, who desired to feed the souls of the elect with heavenly food.

After a fatiguing journey, Mary and Joseph arrived in Bethlehem; but great trouble still awaited them. The city was filled with persons who had come thither for the same purpose, and no room could be found in any house for this holy pair; they were at last obliged to take refuge in a stable, where was born the promised King, the long-expected Messiah, Jesus Christ.

O incomprehensible mystery of the infinite love and mercy of our divine Saviour! He, whose abode is in heaven, and whose footstool is the earth, He is born in the most humble corner of the earth; He, whose throne is above the stars, whom angels serve, lies in a manger exposed to storm and cold, warmed only by the breath of animals. "Where is the palace of this newly born King?"

says St. Bernard; "where are His courtiers? A stable is His palace, a manger His throne, and Mary and Joseph His courtiers." But why did He come in such humility, in such poverty, as a helpless child, not clothed with the pomp and majesty of a king? Because He desired from His very birth to commence the work of redemption. He wished as a child to suffer and be punished for our sins; as a child He desired to teach men to despise earthly power and greatness, to lay aside luxury, pride and sensuality, and by humility and self-denial become His brethren. "Before He could speak with His tongue," says St. Bernard, "all in and about Him taught and preached; every member of His body was even eloquent. He preaches now by example; but the day will come, when He will preach by word. He chose the manger to condemn the glory and vanity of the world; His tears, His swaddling-clothes, all preach penance at the Birth of Christ."

Although our Saviour was born in such humility and poverty, we should, nevertheless, celebrate this event always in a becoming manner. Our heavenly Father wished to glorify His Son at His birth, and as the *World* manifested no interest in this birth, *Heaven* rejoiced over it, and *Angels* announced it to men. And to whom was it first proclaimed? not to the rich nor to the great,—how could they have believed in Him, a poor child lying in a manger?—but to the poor and and humble shepherds, who that night watched over their flocks in the same fields where David had watched when a shepherd. The brightness of God shone round about them, when the angel announced to them that the long-expected Saviour was born, and, as in confirmation of these good tidings, the heavenly army praised God, saying, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men of good will." In the prophecies He is called the Prince of Peace in whose empire there should be no end of peace (Isaiah 9: 7), and in the same sense David spoke of Him, "In his days shall justice spring up, and abundance of peace." (Ps. 71: 7.) "He will speak peace unto his people, and unto his saints, and unto them that are converted to the heart." (Ps. 84: 9.)

The praises of the angels are almost daily repeated at the holy sacrifice of the mass, in the "*Gloria in excelsis Deo*," so that in reciting it, we may commemorate the object for which the Son of God became man, and, united with the heavenly hosts, praise and glorify Him in gratitude and love.

#### INTROIT OF THE SECOND MASS.

"A light shall shine upon us to day, for our Lord is born to us, and he shall be called Wonderful God, the Prince of Peace, the Father of the world to come, of whose reign there shall be no end. (Isaiah 9: 6.) The Lord hath reigned, he is clothed with beauty, the Lord is clothed with strength, and hath girded himself. (Ps. 92: 1.) Glory be to the Father." &c.

These prophecies point to the divine attributes of Christ, and tell us of the



great things He will do for the salvation of mankind; it is, therefore, very proper for us at this time, to meditate on the sublime sentence: "And the word was made flesh."

## PRAYER.

"Grant, we beseech thee, Almighty God, that we who are filled with the new light of Thy Incarnate Word, may show forth in our works, what faith displays in our mind. Through the same Jesus Christ our Saviour. Amen."

## EPISTLE.—Titus 3: 4-7.

"Dearly beloved: The goodness of God our Saviour appeared; not by the works of justice which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the laver of regeneration, and renovation of the Holy Ghost, whom he hath poured forth upon us abundantly, through Jesus Christ our Saviour: that being justified by his grace, we may be heirs, according to hope of life everlasting; in Christ Jesus our Lord."

These words of the Epistle draw our attention to the important fact, that our Redemption through Christ was the work of His love and mercy, and not merited by us, since we are born in original sin and could not, as children of God's wrath, find merit in His sight. This truth we should consider, and endeavor to excite within ourselves a sincere love for our Saviour.

## GOSPEL OF THE SECOND MASS.—Luke 2: 15-20.

"At that time, the shepherds said one to another: Let us go over to Bethlehem, and let us see this word that is come to pass, which the Lord hath showed to us. And they came with haste: and they found Mary and Joseph, and the infant lying in a manger. And seeing they understood of the word that had been spoken to them concerning this child. And all that heard wondered, and at those things that were told them by the shepherds. But Mary kept all these words, pondering them in her heart. And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen, as it was told unto them."

The narrative of this Gospel is connected with that of the first Mass, the shepherds believing the words of the angel, went in haste to Bethlehem; they did not wait until daybreak, they did not even allow the care of their flocks to detain them, they delayed not on their way but *came in haste*, until to their great joy they found the Divine Infant. They teach us to seek Jesus with fervor and joy. St. Ambrose says, "You see the shepherds in haste, none can find Jesus who is slow to seek Him."

## INTROIT OF THE THIRD MASS.

"A child is born to us, and a Son is given to us, whose government is upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called the angel of great counsels. (Isaiah

9: 6. Sing ye to the Lord a new canticle, for he hath done wonderful things. Glory be to the Father," &c.

These words of the Prophet refer to the spiritual government of Christ and His divine mission: the Church invites us to glorify God, on account of the manifold graces He has revealed to us in the Incarnation.

PRAYER.

"Grant, we beseech Thee, Almighty God, that the new birth of Thy only-begotten Son in the flesh, may deliver us, whom the old servitude keeps down under the yoke of sin. Through Christ, our Lord, Amen."

EPISTLE OF THE THIRD MASS.—Heb. 1: 1-12.

"God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spoke in times past to the fathers by the prophets, last of all, in these days, hath spoken to us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he hath made the world: who being the brightness of his glory, and the figure of his substance, and upholding all things by the word of his power, making purgation of sins, sitteth on the right hand of the majesty on high; being made so much better than the Angels, as he hath inherited a more excellent name than they. For to which of the Angels hath he said at any time, Thou art my son, to-day have I begotten thee. And again: I will be to him a Father, and he shall be to me a Son. And again, when he bringeth in the first-begotten into the world he saith: And let all the Angels of God adore him. And to the Angels indeed he saith: He that maketh his Angels spirits, and his ministers a flame of fire. But to the Son: Thy throne, O God, is forever and ever: a sceptre of justice is the sceptre of thy Kingdom. Thou hast loved justice and hated iniquity; therefore God, thy God, hath annointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows. And thou in the beginning, O Lord, didst found the earth; and the works of thy hands are the heavens. They shall perish, but thou shalt continue; and they shall all grow old as a garment. And as a vesture shalt thou change them, and they shall be changed; but thou art the self-same, and thy years shall not fail."

The Apostle clearly defines in the above Epistle the Divinity of Christ, His equality with the Father, and His superiority above all creatures, even the Angels. He cites passages of the old law, and especially of the Psalms, in which the Heavenly Father declares the dignity of His only-begotten Son. By this, the Jews or Hebrews, to whom St. Paul wrote, were called upon to believe in Christ. In their own writings, He was announced to them as a Redeemer;—but we, who, by the grace of God, believe in Him, should be the more confirmed in our faith.

## GOSPEL OF THE THIRD MASS.—John 1: 1-14.

“In the beginning was the word, and the word was with God, and the word was God; the same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him, and without him was made nothing that was made; in him was life, and the life was the light of men: and the light shineth in darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it. There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. This man came for a witness to give testimony of the light, that all men might believe through him. He was not the light, but was to give testimony of the light. That was the true light, which enlighteneth every man that cometh into this world. He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not. He came unto his own, and his own received him not. But as many as received him, he gave them power to become the sons of God: to them that believe in his name, who are born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. And the *Word was made flesh*, and dwelt among us: and we saw his glory, the glory as it were of the only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.”

St. John wrote this Gospel towards the latter part of his life, against some heretics who had attacked the divinity of Christ: he speaks in a special manner of the Eternity and Omnipotence of the *Word*, who was in the beginning with God the Father, by whom, as by the Father, all things were made, and he further calls the *Word* the true heavenly life, by whom sin and unbelief should be destroyed, the hearts of men enlightened, and the light of the true faith and the knowledge and worship of God spread over the earth. According to the Evangelist, many refused to receive the true faith; for our Saviour Himself says in another passage of the same Gospel, “Men love darkness rather than the light, for their works were evil.” (John 3: 19.) Those that received Him—that is, who believed in Him, not only in word but in deed—will be made children of God in baptism; thereby participating in the imperishable inheritance of Heaven. It would be well for all Christians on this festival to reflect upon these great truths, and to remember most gratefully the infinite love of our heavenly Father in sending His Son into the world for our sake. Would, that we might receive the Son of God, who enters our hearts this day—in a spiritual manner—better than did the Jews. Would, that our hearts might be free from sin and adorned with virtue, in order that He may live in us and we in Him.

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## FEAST OF THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY.

(December 8.)

This Feast, not only the most glorious of the Festivals of the Blessed Virgin, but also one of the greatest of the Ecclesiastical Year, reminds us of the doctrine of the Catholic Church—that Mary, the Mother of God, on account of her dignity as His mother, was, by a special grace from God, immaculate from the very moment of her conception, and consequently pleasing in His sight. Hence the title of the “Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin,” and the feast in her honor. According to the Holy Scriptures, man is conceived in sin; Mary, however, was excepted from this law, because she was “full of grace.” She was chosen from among all women, to become the mother of His only-begotten Son, and as a *virgin* conceived and brought forth her Divine Son. How pure and holy must not the vessel be, that contained the Purest and Most Holy—how spotless must she not be, in whom the Son of God took flesh, who carried Him in her virgin-womb, whom the God-man Himself venerated and obeyed as His mother!

If, in the temple of Jerusalem, where the ark of the covenant was kept, no one with unclean hands could offer sacrifice to the Lord, with how much greater purity must not the Blessed Virgin have been adorned, to have been chosen as the abode of the Son of God, and in whom the prophecies of the old law were fulfilled. Can we suppose that she, who was exalted by God himself, could ever have been displeasing in His sight, which would have been the case if she had been conceived in sin? When the Angels were created in purity and holiness, would it have been just for the “Queen of Angels” to have been their inferior for even a moment? If our first mother, Eve, by whose disobedience sin and death came into this world, at her creation was pleasing in the sight of God, why should God deny this prerogative to her who, as the second Eve, brought redemption into the world by giving birth to her Divine Son? It is predicted of her in the Holy Scriptures, that “She shall crush the head of the serpent,” our enemy from the beginning of the world, thereby plainly indicating that she should never be for an instant under the dominion of the Evil one.

The words of Solomon have reference to her, when he says: “Thou art all fair, O my love, and there is not a spot in thee.” (Cant. 4: 7.) “As the lily among thorns, so is my love among the daughters.” (Cant. 2: 2.)

The faithful have always believed in the Immaculate Conception of the Mother of God, and in her purity through life. St. Augustine says: “Mary was altogether excepted from the wrath of the first judgment; I will not even ask the question, for the honor of the Lord, whether she was ever contaminated



with sin; for we know, that she has received most special graces to conquer sin, because she conceived Him, *who could never sin.*"

Although it had not yet been formally declared a dogma of the Church, Christians in all ages have always celebrated this festival with great devotion. Popes, in different councils, have maintained the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary—especially in the council of Trent, during its fifth session. This holy council declares, that it is not its object, to "include the Immaculate Mother of God," when mention is made of original sin, but that the constitution of Pope Sixtus IV. should be maintained under severe penalties.

The doctrine of the Immaculate Conception was declared an Article of faith by Pope Pius IX., now reigning. The many dangers threatening the Church, such as the increasing efforts of infidelity, lukewarmness, and indifference in religious matters, and an insatiate thirst for riches, combined, caused the Holy Father to try and excite within the hearts of the Faithful a greater veneration for the Mother of God, and to obtain her intercession against the many dangers to which the Church was exposed. The Holy Father determined first to consult with all the Bishops, and for this purpose called them to Rome, the centre of Christianity, where, *on the 8th of December, 1854*, in the presence of nearly all the Bishops of the Catholic Church, the *Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin and Mother of God* was declared an *article of faith*, and the festival in her honor to be observed as a day of devotion.

This festival falls in Advent, and serves as a preparation for Christmas, as both are intimately connected; for, as in the language of the Holy Scriptures, *Christ* is called the *Sun of Justice*, because He destroyed the darkness of sin and infidelity, and enlightened all men—so *Mary* is justly called the *pure dawn*, preceding the brilliant day of faith, and proclaiming the *rising* of the *heavenly Sun*.

#### INTROIT OF THE MASS.

"Hail, holy parent, who, as a happy mother, brought forth the King who rules heaven and earth from eternity to eternity. My heart hath uttered a good word; I speak my works to the King. Glory be to the Father," &c.

By these words, generally used at the Introit of the Feasts of the Blessed Virgin, the Church desires to give due honor and veneration to the Mother of God, and, at the same time, all honor to her Divine Son.

#### PRAYER.

"We beseech thee, O Lord, to bestow on Thy servants the gift of heavenly grace, that for those, to whom the Blessed Virgin's maternity was the beginning of salvation, the votive solemnity of her Immaculate Conception may procure increase of peace, through Christ. Amen."

EPISTLE.—Prov. 8: 22-35.

“The Lord possessed me in the beginning of his ways, before he made anything from the beginning. I was set up from eternity, and of old before the earth was made. The depths were not as yet, and I was already conceived; neither had the fountains of waters as yet sprung out: the mountains with their huge bulk had not as yet been established: before the hills I was brought forth: he had not yet made the earth, nor the rivers, nor the poles of the world. When he prepared the heavens I was present; when with a certain law and compass he inclosed the depths; when he established the sky above, and poised the fountains of waters; when he compassed the sea with its bounds, and set a law to the waters, that they should not pass their limits: when he balanced the foundations of the earth, I was with him forming all things; and was delighted every day playing before him at all times; playing in the world, and my delights were to be with the children of men. Now, therefore, ye children, hear me, Blessed are they that keep my ways. Hear instruction and be wise, and refuse it not. Blessed is the man that heareth me, and that watcheth daily at my gates, and waiteth at the posts of my doors. He that shall find me shall find life, and shall have salvation from the Lord.”

The Catholic Church applies these words, used by Solomon in his praise of the Divine wisdom, to the Blessed Virgin Mary; for, as God foresaw, according to His Omniscience before all eternity the fall of man, and, in accordance with His mercy, had decreed His salvation through the Incarnation and Death of His only-begotten Son; so, in the same manner, had He chosen from before the creation of the world, the Blessed Virgin Mary to be the mother of the Son of God.

GOSPEL.—Matthew 1: 1-16.

“The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the Son of David, the son of Abraham: Abraham begot Isaac. And Isaac begot Jacob. And Jacob begot Judas and his brethren. And Judas begot Phares and Zara of Thamar. And Phares begot Esron. And Esron begot Aram. And Aram begot Aminadab. And Aminadab begot Naasson. And Naasson begot Salmon. And Salmon begot Booz of Rahab. And Booz begot Obed of Ruth. And Obed begot Jesse. And Jesse begot David the king. And David the king begot Solomon of her that had been the wife of Urias. And Solomon begot Roboam. And Roboam begot Abia. And Abia begot Asa. And Asa begot Josaphat. And Josaphat begot Joram. And Joram begot Ozias. And Ozias begot Joatham. And Joatham begot Achaz. And Achaz begot Ezechias. And Ezechias begot Manasses. And Manasses begot Amon. And Amon begot Josias. And Josias begot Jechonias and his brethren in the transmigration of Babylon. And after the transmigration of Babylon, Jechonias begot Salathiel. And Salathiel begot Zorobabel. And Zorobabel begot Abiud. And Abiud begot Eliacim. And Eliacim begot

Azor. And Azor begot Sadoc. And Sadoc begot Achim. And Achim begot Eliud. And Eliud begot Eleazar. And Eleazar begot Mathan. And Mathan begot Jacob. And Jacob begot Joseph, the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus, who is called Christ."

The Church, in this Gospel of St. Matthew, gives us the genealogy of St. Joseph, the foster-father of Jesus Christ, for by it the descent of the Blessed Virgin from David is proved. According to Jewish usage the name of Mary is omitted in the book of generation, but the fact of her being the wife of Joseph is sufficient to establish her claim, for no Jewish maiden was permitted to marry outside of her tribe.

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### FEAST OF ST. THOMAS, THE APOSTLE.

(December, 21.)

St. Thomas was born in Galilee, and commonly called Didymus, or the twin. He always evinced great love for his Master, especially when Jesus, in order to raise Lazarus from the dead, requested His disciples to go with Him into Judea; but they refused to accompany Him, for fear of the Jews, when Thomas, full of courage said to them, "Let us also go that we die with him." (John 11: 16.) His intense love for Christ is in some measure an excuse for his unbelief after the Resurrection, as grief for the death of his Saviour so overwhelmed him, that he could not believe in the good tidings, fearing that his sorrow would be only increased if Christ had not truly risen.

#### INTROIT OF THE MASS.

"To me thy friends, O God, are made exceedingly honorable; and their principality is exceedingly strengthened. (Ps. 138.) Lord, thou hast proved me, and known me; thou hast known my sitting down, and my rising up. Glory be to the Father," &c.

#### PRAYER.

"Grant us, we beseech Thee, O Lord, to glory in the solemnity of Thy blessed Apostle Thomas, that we may be ever assisted by his patronage, and follow his faith with suitable devotion, through Christ."

#### EPISTLE.—Ephes. 2: 19—22.

"Brethren: Now you are no more strangers and foreigners; but you are fellow-citizens with the saints, and the domestics of God. Built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone: in

whom all the building, being framed together, groweth up into a holy temple in the Lord. In whom you also are built together into a habitation of God in the Spirit."

The Apostle speaks to Christians in the same sense in which our Saviour addressed His disciples for the last time: "I will not now call you servants, but I have called you friends." (John 15: 15.) For by conversion to the true faith, and being received into the Church of Christ, man, who was before a stranger, becomes one of the family of our heavenly Father, and a member of the communion of saints.

GOSPEL.—John 20: 19–31.

"At that time: When it was late that same day, the first of the week, and the doors were shut, where the disciples were gathered together, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in the midst, and said to them: Peace be to you. And when he had said this, he showed them his hands and his side. The disciples, therefore, were glad when they saw the Lord. He said therefore to them again: Peace be to you. As the Father hath sent me, I also send you. When he had said this, he breathed on them, and said to them: Receive ye the Holy Ghost: whose sins ye shall forgive, they are forgiven them; and whose sins ye shall retain, they are retained. Now Thomas, one of the twelve, who is called Didymus, was not with them when Jesus came. The other disciples, therefore, said to him: We have seen the Lord. But he said to them: Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the place of the nails, and put my hand into his side, I will not believe. And after eight days again his disciples were within, and Thomas with them. Jesus cometh, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said: Peace be to you. Then he saith to Thomas: Put in thy finger hither, and see my hands; and bring hither thy hand, and put it into my side: and be not faithless, but believing. Thomas answered, and saith to him: My Lord and my God. Jesus saith to him: Because thou hast seen me, Thomas, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and have believed. Many other signs also did Jesus in the sight of his disciples, which are not written in this book. But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing, you may have life in his name."

When the Apostles commenced their labors, St. Thomas was sent among the Parthians, in Western Asia, to preach Jesus crucified to them. From there he went to Media, Persia, and India, teaching everywhere the truths of Christianity, and establishing churches wherever he preached. In the course of his journeys he came to Ethiopia, and succeeded in converting many of its inhabitants to Christianity. Different opinions exist in regard to the scene of his last labors,



and as to the place of his death. It is generally believed, however, that in the year 75 A.D., he suffered martyrdom in the city of Calamina, in India, having been pierced through by the lance of an idolatrous priest. The Portuguese built, in the 16th century, a city near his grave, which they called St. Thomas, in honor of him.

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### FEAST OF ST. STEPHEN.—FIRST MARTYR.

(December 26.)

The Catholic Church celebrates the Festivals of her saints on the day of their death, because she justly considers their death, which, in the language of the Psalmist, "is precious in the sight of the Lord," as the beginning of their eternal life in Heaven. Not without reason, then, does the birth-day of St. Stephen in heaven immediately succeed the birth-day of our Saviour upon earth; for St. Stephen was one of the disciples of Christ, and the first of the glorious army of martyrs, and he is venerated as one of the greatest saints of the Church.

#### INTROIT OF THE MASS.

"Princes sat and spoke against me, and the wicked persecuted me. Help me, O Lord, my God, for thy servant was employed in thy justifications. Blessed are the undefiled in the way, who walk in the law of the Lord. (Ps. 118.) Glory be to the Father," &c.

These words of the royal prophet are well adapted to St. Stephen, who kept himself undefiled from the world, lived in the faithful observance of God's laws, but who was unjustly persecuted by the wicked.

#### PRAYER.

"Grant us, we beseech Thee, O Lord, to imitate what we honor, that we may also learn to love our enemies, as we celebrate the feast of him who knew how to beseech, even for his persecutors, our Lord Jesus Christ, who livest and reignest, &c. Amen."

#### EPISTLE.—Acts 6: 8-10; 7: 54-59.

"In those days, Stephen, full of grace and fortitude, did great wonders and signs among the people. Now, there arose some of that which is called the synagogue of the Libertines, and of the Cyrenians, and of the Alexandrians, and of them that were of Cilicia and Asia, disputing with Stephen. And they were not able to resist the wisdom and the spirit that spoke. Now, hearing

these things, they were cut to the heart, and they gnashed with their teeth at him. But he being full of the Holy Ghost, looking up steadfastly to heaven, saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God. And he said: Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God. And they, crying out with a loud voice, stopped their ears, and with one accord ran violently upon him. And casting him forth without the city, they stoned him. And the witnesses laid down their garments at the feet of a young man, whose name was Saul. And they stoned Stephen, invoking and saying: Lord Jesus, receive my spirit. And falling on his knees, he cried with a loud voice, saying: Lord, lay not this sin to their charge. And when he had said this, he fell asleep in the Lord."

St. Stephen was one of the seven deacons, whose office it was to assist the Apostles in their labors. They were obliged to preach the Gospel, administer to the wants of the poor, and had the management of the temporal affairs of the Church. Stephen was the first in rank among the deacons; the Holy Scriptures call him "the man full of faith and of the Holy Ghost;" and it is said of him, that "full of grace and fortitude, he did great wonders and signs among the people." No greater praise could be bestowed upon the saint. The zeal of St. Stephen, in spreading the doctrine of Christ, and the success he met with in his labors, excited the Jews against him, especially as they could not, with all their cunning, resist the "wisdom and the spirit" with which he spoke, and they were covered with confusion. Filled with hatred, they determined to kill him. They could, however, find nothing against him; therefore, like the enemies of Christ, they accused him of blasphemy. Under this pretence they brought him before the council, where, as in the days of Christ, they produced false witnesses, who said that he never ceased "speaking words against the holy places and the laws." After hearing these grievous accusations, all that sat in the council looked on him, but even his looks confounded them; for the Holy Scripture says, "They saw his face, as if it had been the face of an angel;" the grace of the Holy Ghost shone in him, and his face was glorious in its heavenly beauty. When the High Priest called on Stephen for his defence, he successfully vindicated himself from the charge of blasphemy and contempt of the law.

He spoke to them of the Patriarchs, and enumerated all the graces which the Lord had given to Abraham and to his seed, but he particularly dwelt upon the history of Joseph, the son of Jacob, who had been unjustly accused and condemned (a beautiful type of the Saviour). He then spoke to them of Moses, and of all the benefits, which the Lord, through him, had bestowed upon the Israelites, and how they, full of ingratitude, had forsaken the true worship of God, and become idolaters. Finally, he spoke of the temple built by Solomon, to which the worship of God should not be confined, as no house made by

hand can contain "*Him, whose throne is heaven, and whose footstool is the earth.*" Thus St. Stephen refuted all the charges brought against him, and even proved to the Jewish people, that they had lost all the respect and veneration due to God. "You stiff-necked, and uncircumcised in heart and ears, you always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers *did*, so do you also." (Acts 7: 51.)

This appeal of St. Stephen, so full of convincing truths, should have penetrated the hearts of the false accusers, for their confusion reveals their malice; but, like the wicked, who closing their hearts against the truth, become only the more hardened, when their evil deeds are exposed; so the Jews, not being able to speak on account of their fury, "gnashed their teeth at him." But when St. Stephen made known to them his heavenly vision, they could no longer contain their rage, but casting him without the city, stoned him to death. According to the testimony of the most reliable historians, St. Stephen suffered martyrdom on the 26th of December, in consequence of which, the Church celebrates his feast immediately after Christmas.

GOSPEL.—Matt. 23: 34-39.

"At that time, Jesus said to the Scribes and Pharisees: Behold I send to you prophets, and wise men, and scribes: and some of them you will put to death and crucify, and some you will scourge in your synagogues, and persecute from city to city. That upon you may come all the just blood that hath been shed upon the earth from the blood of Abel the just, even unto the blood of Zacharias, the son of Barachias, whom you killed between the temple and the altar. Amen, I say to you, all these things shall come upon this generation. Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them that are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered together thy children, as the hen doth gather her chickens under her wings and thou wouldst not. Behold, your house shall be left to you desolate. For I say to you, you shall not see me henceforth till you say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord."

The same just reproach which St. Stephen made before the council to the Jews, that they had always persecuted, abused and put to death the messengers of God, had, according to the Gospel of to-day, been made before by our Saviour to this wicked and stubborn race. But He had, at the same time, announced to them the terrible punishment they would call down upon themselves by continuing in their sins, and that the blood of all the just and holy men shed by them, would be visited upon them and upon their descendants. Yet, when they had dragged the Saviour before the tribunal, and in their fury demanded His death, they with one accord cried out: "His blood be upon us, and upon our children." (Matt. 27: 25.)

According to the prophecy of the Saviour, their city and temple would also be destroyed, and they themselves would be scattered over the earth, and be

rejected by Him. They should not see again their Saviour, whom they had despised and treated as a criminal, until He came in judgment, when he would appear in His majesty and glory, and when all the nations and races of the earth, Jews and Heathens, the faithful and the unfaithful, the good and the wicked, would acknowledge Him as their Lord and King, their God and their Judge, and, though trembling with fear from the consciousness of guilt, they would be compelled to worship and adore Him.

Those sorrowful and compassionate words of the Saviour: "Jerusalem, Jerusalem, \* \* \* how often would I have gathered together thy children \* \* \* and thou wouldst not"—contain not only a warning to the infatuated Jews, who wantonly rejected all proofs of the mercy and love of God, thus making ineffectual all that Christ had suffered for them, but should serve as a caution to those who, by their impenitence, close their hearts against the grace of God. For even the Lord cannot save him, who in fatal blindness lets the time of grace pass by, thereby refusing to be saved. Who should not consider, and take to his heart, for the sake of his own salvation, this important truth?

St. Chrysostom says, in reference to this subject: "Let us be virtuous, I conjure you, in the time that remains to us; for, as the acknowledgment of the Jews came too late, so will be our repentance, if delayed too long. The pilot is of no use when the ship is sunk, nor is the physician of any avail, when the patient is dead—both must watch and work before the patient dies, and the ship is lost; thus preventing death and shipwreck."

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## FESTIVAL OF ST. JOHN, THE APOSTLE AND EVANGELIST.

(December 27.)

St. John, a son of Zebedee, and of Salome, and a brother of the Apostle St. James the Greater, was a native of Galilee, and by occupation a fisherman. When John the Baptist appeared, to announce the Advent of the long-expected Saviour, he listened to his teachings, and from him obtained a true knowledge of Jesus Christ, whose follower he afterwards became. He was the youngest of the disciples, but was chosen from among them all, to be the Beloved Disciple of Jesus. John possessed a character full of simplicity and mildness, and was distinguished for the great love he always exhibited towards his Master. But it was especially his purity of heart and his spotless chastity, which he preserved inviolate through life, that made him so peculiarly worthy of the Saviour's love and distinction. St. Augustin says: "The rare beauty of his chastity made him dear to our Lord."

St. John, as the beloved friend of the Saviour, enjoyed with Peter and his



brother James, the confidence of his Master. These three disciples were the only witnesses of His transfiguration on Mount Thabor, and of His sufferings on the Mount of Olives. John was always near the Saviour, sat by His side at the Last Supper, and was permitted to ask the question as to "who would be the outcast among them, who would betray his Lord and Master;" the great St. Peter fearing to make the inquiry. But he gave the greatest proof of his love at the foot of the cross; when nearly all of the disciples had fled, for fear of the Jews, and when even Peter had denied Him, John with the Blessed Virgin Mother remained with his suffering Saviour, and was consoled by hearing from the lips of his expiring Redeemer the words: "Woman, behold thy son; Son, behold thy Mother;" and from that hour he received the Holy Mother into his house, and cared for her as for his own.

When, after His resurrection, the Saviour appeared to the disciples near the Lake Tiberias, and commanded them to "cast out their nets," John was the first to recognize him. It was Peter and John who, after the descent of the Holy Ghost, worked the great miracle in the name of Jesus Crucified, by instantly curing a lame man who sat at the entrance of the temple. Fifteen years after the Ascension of our Lord, in accordance with his command, the Apostle went forth to preach the Gospel to all parts of the earth; but St. John still remained in Jerusalem with the Blessed Virgin, and did not leave until after her Assumption into heaven. He was then sent into Asia Minor, and there founded many Christian communities. After the death of St. Paul, he had his seat at Ephesus as head of the churches in Asia. In other parts of Asia, especially among the Parthians, did he also preach the Gospel. He everywhere confirmed the elections of the Bishops chosen by Ss. Peter and Paul, and appointed Bishops over the newly established churches, for which purpose, although advanced in age, he undertook long and tiresome journeys. In the second general persecution of the Christians, under the Emperor Domitian in the year 95, St. John was arrested by order of the Governor of Asia, and sent to Rome. There he firmly confessed his faith in Jesus Christ, and was thereupon thrown into a kettle filled with boiling oil, in a place outside of the city, before the so-called Latin Gate, from which, however, wonderfully preserved by God, he came forth uninjured. In memory of this event, the Catholic Church yearly celebrates, on the 6th of May, a festival, entitled "Festival of St. John before the Latin Gate."

By order of the emperor, St. John was then banished to the desert island of Patmos. The Saint, living in strict retirement, was here favored by God, with those wonderful visions which he has left us in the Apocalypse, wherein the future destiny of the Church, the last judgment, with all its terrors, and the glory of heaven, is described in the most sublime manner. After the death of the emperor, in the year 96, St. John returned to Ephesus, and labored with renewed zeal for the sanctification of the souls confided to his care. It was about this time, that he wrote his Gospel, the greatest of all his writings, because

the Apostle in it proves the Divinity of Christ, attacked at that time by many heretics. Beside the Revelations and Gospel, St. John wrote three Epistles, in which he again treats of the Divinity of Christ, exhorts all to a pure and holy life, in order to guard against the snares of the seducer, particularly the heretics, and enjoins upon them the great command of love. This holy love, which penetrated the whole being of the great disciple, he impressed upon his people whenever he addressed them, for in this commandment all the others are included, and without it no action of man can find merit in the sight of God. When old age prevented him from preaching, and when too weak to walk, he had himself carried into the churches of the Faithful, and would constantly repeat the words: "My children, love one another." His attendants asked him once, why he always used this language; when he answered, "Because this is the command of the Lord, and if this is done, all is done." St. Jerome who relates this beautiful feature in the life of the great Apostle, adds, "This answer is entirely worthy of the great John, the beloved disciple of Christ; it should be written in golden letters, or rather, it should be inscribed on the hearts of the faithful." St. John died in the peace of God at Ephesus, 100 years after the birth of Christ, and in the 94th year of his age. Although the only one of the Apostles who did not suffer martyrdom, he merited a martyr's crown, for he confessed his faith when persecuted, and though miraculously preserved by the Lord from a terrible death, he yet "drank from the bitter cup," as the Saviour had prophesied of him, and of his brother James. (Mark 10: 39.)

## INTROIT OF THE MASS.

"In the midst of the Church the Lord opened his mouth, and filled him with the spirit of wisdom and understanding, and clothed him with a robe of glory. It is good to give praise to the Lord, and to sing to thy name, O Most High." Ecclus. 15.

## PRAYER.

"Mercifully illustrate Thy Church, O Lord, that, enlightened by the doctrines of Thy blessed Apostle and Evangelist, St. John, she may arrive at gifts everlasting, through Christ."

## EPISTLE.—Ecclus. 15: 1-6.

"He that feareth God will do good: and he that possesseth justice shall lay hold on her, and she will meet him as an honorable mother, and will receive him as a wife married from a virgin. With the bread of life and understanding, she shall feed him, and give him the water of wholesome wisdom to drink: and she shall be made strong in him, and he shall not be moved: and she shall hold him fast, and he shall not be confounded: and she shall exalt him among his neighbors, and in the midst of the church she shall open his mouth, and shall fill him with the spirit of wisdom and understanding, and shall clothe him with a robe of glory, she

shall heap upon him a treasure of joy and gladness, and shall cause him to inherit an everlasting name."

GOSPEL.—John 21: 19-24.

"At that time: Jesus said to Peter: Follow me. Peter turning about, saw that disciple whom Jesus loved following, who also leaned on his breast at supper, and said: Lord, who is he that shall betray thee? Him, therefore, when Peter had seen, he saith to Jesus: Lord, and what shall this man do? Jesus saith to him: So I will have him to remain till I come, what is it to thee? follow thou me. This saying, therefore, went abroad among the brethren, that that disciple should not die. And Jesus did not say to him: He should not die; but, so I will have him to remain till I come, what is it to thee? This is that disciple who giveth testimony of these things, and hath written these things: and we know that his testimony is true."

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## FEAST OF THE HOLY INNOCENTS.

(December 28.)

Not less significant than the two preceeding Feasts, is that of the Holy Innocents; its celebration is intimately connected with that of the Nativity of our Lord. They were the children who were put to death by the cruel King Herod, out of hatred to the Infant Jesus, and who suffered in their infancy the martyr's death for Him, their Lord and Saviour, and who, freed from original sin by being baptized in blood, were as pure lambs, offered to the spotless Lamb of God as the firstlings of the flock.

St. Augustin, says, "It is God who is born; therefore innocent offerings are due to Him. Pure lambs must be offered to Him, since He, the spotless Lamb, is to be offered on the Cross." The Catholic Church, therefore, honors justly these innocent children as the first of the Christian martyrs, and greets them to-day in the following beautiful words: "Hail! Holy Children: the persecutor of Christ destroyed you in the dawn of life, as the storm breaks the rosebud; O sweet and tender blossoms, offered to Christ, you are now singing the praises of the Lamb of God, you now carry in your hands the palm, and have won the Martyr's Crown."

INTROIT OF THE MASS.

"Out of the mouth of infants and sucklings thou hast perfected praise, because of thy enemies, O Lord. O Lord, how admirable is thy name in the whole earth. Glory be to the Father," &c. (Ps. 8.)



These words of the royal prophet were fulfilled at the last entrance of Jesus into Jerusalem, when the children greeted him with "Hosanna to the Son of David;" and are also applied by the Church to the Holy Innocents, who, by their martyrdom, contributed to the glory of the new-born Saviour.

## PRAYER.

"O God, whose praise the martyred Innocents confessed on this day—not by speaking, but by dying—mortify in us all the evils of vices, that our life may also confess by actions Thy faith, which our tongue proclaims, through our Lord."

## GOSPEL.—Matt. 2 : 13-18.

"At that time: An angel of the Lord appeared in sleep to Joseph, saying: Arise, and take the child and his mother, and fly into Egypt: and be there until I shall tell thee; for it will come to pass that Herod will seek the child to destroy him. Who arose, and took the child and his mother by night, and retired into Egypt; and he was there until the death of Herod; that it might be fulfilled which the Lord spoke by the prophet, saying: Out of Egypt have I called my Son. Then Herod, perceiving that he was deluded by the wise men, was exceeding angry; and sending, killed all the men-children that were in Bethlehem and in all the borders thereof, from two years old and under, according to the time which he had diligently inquired of the wise men. Then was fulfilled that which was spoken by Jeremiah, the prophet, saying: A voice in Rama was heard, lamentation and great mourning; Rachel bewailing her children, and would not be comforted, because they are not."

We see in this Gospel, how lovingly Divine Providence watched over the Holy Family—how the Heavenly Father saved them from the cruel Herod. The Lord, in His Omnipotence, would have been able otherwise to protect his only-begotten Son from the impotent rage of the tyrant, but it was necessary that the Saviour should suffer persecution in His infancy, in order to encourage those who are innocently persecuted. The resignation to the will of God always shown by the Blessed Virgin and St. Joseph, was to be proved anew on this occasion. St. Chrysostom says: "When Joseph heard the angel's command, he was in no wise angry at it, for he was a man full of faith, and did not even ask when they should return, which time had not been mentioned by the angel. Yet this did not diminish his faith; he obeyed the more readily, and joyfully submitted to every hardship."

It was also of particular significance, that the infant Jesus was carried into Egypt. Joseph, the pious son of Jacob, who in some respects may be looked upon as a type of the Saviour, had also taken refuge there from the persecutions of his kindred; but, in accordance with the wise dispensation of God, afterwards became the benefactor not only of his own family, but even of



nations. Idolatry, with all its attendant vices, had overrun the land, but the Saviour, by his gracious presence in this country, laid the foundation for the glorious company of holy hermits, that, at a later period, flourished in Egypt. The great saints, Eusebius and Jerome assert, that "by the coming of Jesus into Egypt, idols were overturned, and the wicked spirits who, until then, had deceived the people, expelled from the land." Isaiah also foretold the fact, saying: "Behold, the Lord will ascend upon a swift cloud, and will enter into Egypt, and the idols of Egypt shall be moved at his presence, and the heart of Egypt shall melt in the midst thereof." (Is. 19.)

The killing of so many innocent children in and around Bethlehem, and the miraculous deliverance of the infant Jesus, had been already typified in the Old Testament, by the murder of all the newly-born Hebrew boys in Egypt, by command of the wicked Pharaoh, from which fate Moses (one of the most beautiful prototypes of the Saviour) had been saved by God's wonderful Providence, to become afterwards the deliverer of his people.

The prophecy of Jeremiah, concerning Rachel mourning for her children, is to be taken in a figurative sense. Rachel, the wife of the patriarch Jacob, represents the Jewish kingdom. She bewails her children's fate—then in captivity—as dead, being lost to the nation; thus typifying the mourning of the unhappy mothers in Bethlehem, whose children were slain by order of Herod the king.

The death of the Innocents is again, according to the interpretation of St. Jerome, a type of the persecutions Christians in later times would meet with, from the hands of Jews and heathens, they thinking, that by putting to death those who believed in Jesus crucified, the Kingdom of God could be swept from the earth.

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## SUNDAY AFTER CHRISTMAS.

### INTROIT OF THE MASS.

"While all things were in quiet silence, and the night was in the midst of her course, thy Almighty word, O Lord, came down from heaven, from thy royal throne. (Wisdom 18: 14, 15.) The Lord has reigned; he is clothed with beauty; the Lord is clothed with strength, and hath girded himself." (Ps. 92: 1.)

The Church applies very properly the words of Solomon, speaking of the judgment of God upon idolaters, to the coming of the Son of God, who, although in the form of man, appeared in His glory and might.

## PRAYER.

"Almighty and eternal God, direct our actions so as to be pleasing to Thee, that, in the name of Thy beloved Son, we may deserve to abound in good works. Who livest and reignest."

## EPISTLE.—Gal. 4: 1-7.

"Brethren: As long as the heir is a child, he differeth nothing from a servant, though he be lord of all; but is under tutors and governors until the time appointed by the father: so we also, when we were children, were in bondage under the elements of the world. But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent his Son, made of a woman, made under the law: that he might redeem them who were under the law; that he might receive the adoption of sons. And because you are sons, God hath sent the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying: Abba, Father. Therefore now he is not a servant, but a son. And if a son, an heir also through God."

The Apostle in this lesson compares mankind before the birth of Christ to a child, who, although heir to its father's possessions, is, until of age, under the guardianship of tutors. This tutorship was the Jewish law, with its many precepts, to the observance of which the Jews were strictly bound. Christ has, however, through His Redemption, freed us from all these laws, such as circumcision, purification, and sacrifice, only obliging the faithful to observe strictly the ten commandments in word and deed, thereby exempting us from the precepts of the old law, and adopting us as children of God.

## GOSPEL.—Luke 2: 33-40.

"At that time: Joseph and Mary, the mother of Jesus, were wondering at these things, which were spoken concerning him. And Simeon blessed them, and said to Mary his mother: Behold this child is set for the fall and for the resurrection of many in Israel, and for a sign which shall be contradicted. And thy own soul a sword shall pierce, that out of many hearts thoughts may be revealed. And there was one Anna, a prophetess, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Aser: she was far advanced in years, and had lived with her husband seven years from her virginity. And she was a widow until fourscore and four years: who departed not from the temple, by fastings and prayers serving night and day. Now she at the same hour coming in, confessed to the Lord, and spoke of him to all that looked for the redemption of Israel. And after they had performed all things according to the law of the Lord, they returned into Galilee, into their city, Nazareth. And the child grew, and waxed strong, full of wisdom: and the grace of God was in him."

Our attention in this Gospel is directed to the remarkable prophecy of Simeon, in which he foretold the reception of our Saviour among men, the opposition

He would meet with, and the sorrow the Blessed Virgin would experience in witnessing the sufferings of her Divine Son. Isaiah had prophesied the same of the Saviour, saying, "And he shall be a sanctification to you, but for a stone of stumbling, and for a rock of offence to the two houses of Israel, for a snare and a ruin to the inhabitants of Jerusalem. And very many of them shall stumble and fall, and shall be broken in pieces, and shall be snared, and taken." (Isaiah 8: 14, 15.) The history not only of our Saviour, but of the Catholic Church down to the present time, show how accurately these prophecies have been fulfilled. Christians are hereby earnestly admonished to receive the teachings of Christ with a faithful heart, observe His commandments, imitate His virtues, and destroy within themselves everything opposed to Jesus.

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# LEGENDS.

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## ST. ELIGIUS.

(December 1.)

"The Narrow Path"

ALTHOUGH 1,200 years have passed away since Eligius lived, we still possess a complete history of his life, written by his friend St. Audoen. From this biography, however, we will give but a short extract.

Eligius was born of Christian parents, and, when very young, was apprenticed to an honest goldsmith. He exhibited the innocence of the dove by his pure and upright conduct, and the wisdom of the serpent by permitting no one to deceive him. He devoted his leisure hours in attending the divine services of the church, and while working he would meditate upon the words of God he had heard.

King Clotar II., learning that Eligius was a very skilful workman, charged him with the making of a royal chair, and a certain amount of gold and precious stones were given to him for the purpose. Some time after, Eligius brought the throne to the king, who was astonished at its splendor; he at once ordered the goldsmith to be richly rewarded, but when Eligius brought in a second throne equally beautiful, telling him that enough of gold and jewels had been left, after making the first, sufficient for the construction of another, the king's astonishment reached its height. He was so impressed by the skill and honesty of Eligius, that he commanded apartments to be prepared for him in the palace, and soon after appointed him to the office of warden.

Having now the charge of important matters, the usual oath was demanded of him by the king; but, faithful to the command of the Holy Scriptures to "swear not at all," Eligius at first refused; the king persisted in requiring it of him, when he burst into tears, as he did not wish to offend the king, and still less act against the dictates of his conscience. Upon witnessing his grief, the



king no longer urged him, but said to him, with the greatest kindness, "Your refusal to swear deserves as much confidence as if you had taken an hundred oaths."

In the midst of the pleasures of the imperial court, young Eligius never neglected the welfare of his soul; he would go often to confession, and led a very holy life. He fortified himself against the sinful indulgence of his passions by constantly meditating upon death, judgment, and the eternal punishments of hell; he entreated Almighty God by day and by night to forgive him his sins; and from the severity of his fasts, his countenance became exceedingly pale and thin. A prayer-book was always open before him, so that even when busy working with his hands, he could frequently direct his eyes to the word of God. Eligius was very zealous in his efforts to ransom captives, and when his own means did not suffice, he would sell his clothes to purchase their freedom.

The door of his dwelling was so beset by the poor that it resembled the entrance of a bee-hive, and when a stranger would ask where Eligius lived, he was told, "He lives where many of the poor stand before the house." He would himself wait upon the poor, who were fed in his house, and only after they had been satisfied would he eat of what they had left.

Eligius was a very handsome man, and accommodating himself to the fashion of the court, at first dressed splendidly, but always wore next to him a shirt made of rough hair. He soon, however, sold his costly garments for the benefit of the poor, and was once so thinly clad that the king sent him some of his own clothes; but these, too, were soon converted into money for the sake of the poor.

Eligius was in no sense a courtier—for if he was at prayer when sent for by the king, the latter would have to wait until he had finished his devotions. He was always obedient to the royal orders, if not in conflict with the commands of God, and for this reason he retained the confidence of Clotar's successor, Dagobert; for the king knew that when he gave to Eligius it was equivalent to giving to the poor, and in consequence, never refused anything that he would ask for.

Eligius, although living in the world, led a truly angelic life. St. Audeon tells us that he was unceasingly occupied in the exercise of good works. If he saw a poor man he assisted him; if he met a rich one, he would exhort him to be charitable. Upon his journeys he would always visit the churches and convents in his road, and out of reverence alighted at a distance, in order to approach on foot the holy places. He would then collect all the poor in the neighborhood, and have an excellent meal served to them at his expense. He denied himself the use of meat and wine, and would always lie upon the floor when he slept.

The great esteem with which the king treated Eligius, and which was not gained by flattery on his part, made him neither presumptuous nor selfish; he

did not hesitate to remonstrate with the king, when ordered to do anything inconsistent with the precepts of Christianity. At one time a great heretic entered France, and endeavored to seduce the people from the true faith; Eligius, having been informed of it, consulted with other unwavering Catholics, as to the best means for preventing the spreading of this evil. He, in accordance with their advice, begged the Bishops to convoke a council, in order to suppress the growth of the heresy, and himself traveled about from one place to another, imploring the people to remain steadfast to their faith, and telling them how to guard against the infection. Almighty God blessed his efforts; for the heretics were soon after banished from the country.

We see in the life of Eligius a man who, in the midst of his intercourse with the world, and amid the cares of office, persevered in leading a godly life. What was possible for the goldsmith Eligius, is also possible for every man of business. You cannot, therefore, excuse yourselves by the circumstances of your life, for neglecting your duties as Christians. No matter how various your occupations may be, you can still take care of your soul, and grow in godliness, if you only employ the right means—prayer, fasting, and alms-giving. By the exercise of those virtues, you are protected from the temptations of the devil, and enrich yourself with merit.

By imitating the conduct of men of the world, we walk in the broad road that leads to destruction; but, by choosing the narrow path, we travel through the journey of life—we may be weary, and sometimes faint-hearted, yet if our trust is in God, His strong arm will uphold us. It is not always necessary to enter a convent in order to reach Heaven, neither is it requisite to bind ourselves to the observance of worldly customs on the other hand; but, to obtain the reward promised by Christ, we should devote ourselves henceforth to works of self-denial and charity.

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## ST. PETER CHRYSOLOGUS.

(December 2.)

"Our Father in Spirit."

ST. PETER was in his youth instructed and led to the practice of a holy life by the Bishop Cornelius of Imola. He says himself in one of his sermons which have come to us: "Cornelius was my father, he had begotten me through the Gospel; pious, he has nourished me with piety; himself holy, he has held and urged me to a holy life." Cornelius ordained his pupil deacon, and charged him with the management of the church property, and with the care of the poor. But at the same time St. Peter shone by his eloquence like a burning lamp in the

temple of the Lord. For that reason he received the name of "*Chrysologus*," signifying one whose speech is gold.

When later, after the death of the Bishop of the celebrated city of Ravenna, a new one had been elected, a delegation was sent to Rome to obtain the sanction of the Pope. Cornelius and his deacon, in order to transact some ecclesiastical business, had arrived there about the same time. Now Pope Sixtus III. had a vision: he saw the Apostle Peter and his pupil, Apollinar, who had been the first Bishop of Ravenna. They showed him the figure of a young man, indicating, at the same time, that God wished he should become Bishop of Ravenna, and not the one who had been elected.

The next day, when the delegates from Ravenna introduced the Bishop elect, and begged the sanction of the Pope, he would not give it, but ordered them to bring before him all persons who had come with the embassy from Ravenna. Among them, however, he found none who resembled the young man he had seen in his vision. Bishop Cornelius—as already mentioned—being at that time in Rome, the Pope ordered him also to bring before him his companion. Scarcely had his eyes fallen on Peter the deacon, than he recognized him as the one pointed out to him by a higher revelation, and he said joyfully to those present: "This one, through Divine Providence, is designed for Bishop of Ravenna." The delegates of Ravenna, however, took it ill that a stranger should be placed at their head, and Chrysologus himself was so alarmed at his being appointed to such a difficult and responsible office, that he prayed the Holy Father on his knees to desist from his intention, and to appoint another. Partly to encourage St. Chrysologus, partly to appease the delegates of Ravenna, the Pope now related to them how he, through Divine manifestation, had been led to this choice, whereupon Chrysologus, in order not to oppose the will of God, accepted the high office. At Ravenna, where they had learned all that had passed in connection with his appointment, he was received with much joy, and he told the inhabitants they should now faithfully follow his exhortations, since he had taken upon himself such a heavy burden for their salvation.

Many things have been recorded regarding the saintly life of St. Chrysologus, and how he performed with apostolic zeal the duties of his episcopal office. Yet, instead of giving here a minute detail of them, I regard it as more useful to let him speak to us himself, so that his words may still edify us; for we possess still seventy-six of his sermons, which a later Bishop of Ravenna has collected. I will select from them what he has said on the Lord's Prayer.

*Our Father who art in heaven!* In praying thus you must not take it as if He was not on earth, as if He who encloses all was limited to a particular place; but you should remember that you are of a heavenly race whose Father dwelleth in heaven, and exert yourselves through a holy life to become worthy of a holy Father! He proves himself a child of God, who exhibits divine virtues.

*Hallowed be Thy name!* We are His race, and His name belongs to us, we



pray, therefore, that His name, which is holy in and through itself, may be hallowed in us. For the name of God is either honored or dishonored by our actions. The Apostle says therefore: "The name of God is dishonored through you among the heathens."

*Thy kingdom come!* When did God not rule? We pray thus, that He who has always ruled for Himself, now may rule in us, to enable us to rule according to Him. The Devil, sin, and death have ruled, and mortals were for a long time in bondage. We pray, therefore, that through the power of God, the devil may be overcome, sin cease, death be destroyed, bondage be enslaved, and that, being liberated, we may rule in eternal life!

*Thy will be done, as in heaven, so on earth!* That is the kingdom of God, when on earth as well as in heaven, God's will alone prevails: when in all men God breathes, God lives, God works, God rules, God is all—according to the word of the Apostle: "Let God be all in you all."

*Give us to-day our daily bread!* He who has given us Himself as Father, who has adopted us as children, who has made us His heirs, who has presented us with His name, His honor, His kingdom, has taught us Himself to pray for our daily bread. In the kingdom of God, in the profusion of heavenly gifts, for what does human poverty ask? Does such a good, kind, liberal Father not give bread to His children but when begged for it? Where is the word: "Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithall shall we be clothed?" Does He bid us pray for what He forbids us to think of? As heavenly Father He invites us to ask as heavenly children heavenly bread. He said Himself: "I am the bread which has come down from heaven!" He is namely, the bread sowed in a Virgin, leavened in flesh, kneaded in sufferings, baked in the oven of the tomb, preserved in the churches, offered upon the altars, and daily presented to the faithful as heavenly food.

*And forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us!* If you cannot be without sin, and if you wish entire forgiveness at all times, then forgive ye also always. As much as you desire to be forgiven so much forgive ye. As many times as you would be forgiven, so many times forgive ye. Finally, since you desire that all shall be forgiven you, then forgive you also all. Remember, O man! in thine own heart is the source of forgiveness—if forgiveness flows out, it flows also back into thee!

*And lead us not into temptation!* On earth, life itself is a temptation. "The life of man," says Job, "is a temptation." Let us pray, therefore, that He shall not leave us to our own judgment, but keep us in all our doings with fatherly love, and mark out for us our course.

*But deliver us from evil!* From what evil? From the devil, who is the source of all evil. The devil was originally a good spirit, now he is a wicked spirit, older than the world, sly and practised in deceit. Therefore, he is not only called evil, but the Evil from whom comes all that is evil. We must pray



God, therefore, that He shall deliver us from the devil, through the conqueror Christ.

He whom you shall invoke has Himself pointed out to you, in a few words, the subject of your supplication, the measure of your prayer, to learn therefrom what and how to pray. The heavenly King wished also to dictate to you Himself the petitions He intends to grant. Where God hears His own words in the prayer, there we must have entire confidence that we shall be heard."

St. Chrysologus had performed the duties of his episcopal office for eighteen years, when he foresaw his speedy death. But he wished to commit his soul into the hands of the Lord at the place where he had first seen the light of the world, and he betook himself, therefore, to Imola. His townsmen, and their Bishop, who felt honored and happy on account of his presence, received the holy man with great joy. The next day he went to the church of the Martyr Kassian, offered the sacrifice of the Holy Mass, and prayed God to grant him the assistance of St. Kassian as patron in the hour of death. He begged also the Bishop and the community to bury him on the side of the altar of St. Kassian. Thereupon he prayed in a loud voice: "I implore thee, blessed Martyr Kassian, pray for me; I have been a member of thy house, nourished in this temple by Cornelius, the Bishop of this Diocese. Again returned to thee, I commit now my soul to Almighty God, but to thee I recommend my body!" After he had thus prayed he gave the people the episcopal benediction and died in the Lord full of quiet and peace at the side of the altar, about the hour of mid-day.

St. Chrysologus died in the year 450, St. Leo being Pope, and when, in 1497, the Bishop and Clergy of Imola opened his grave, they found his body in a state of perfect preservation.

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## ST. FRANCIS XAVIER.

(December 3.)

"Means of conversion."

ST. FRANCIS XAVIER was a native of Spain, and was one of the first members of the "Society of Jesus," founded by St. Ignatius Loyola.

At that time, the Portuguese had conquered a great part of India, which they had garrisoned, and from which they collected large revenues. But almost all of the inhabitants were still heathens, and the King of Portugal, wishing to propagate the Christian religion in his distant possessions, applied to the Pope for priests best qualified for that purpose.

Thus it happened that St. Francis Xavier, with several other Jesuits, was sent to that remote country to teach the truths of Christianity to an ignorant and idolatrous people.

The voyage lasted for months, St. Francis spending his time in endeavoring to gain souls for Heaven. He was kind and affable to all; he would converse with the sailor about navigation, with the soldier about war, and with the merchant about commerce: he would even associate with those around a card-table, and seem interested in their losses and gains. He did all this, so that none among the passengers would absent themselves when he preached: by his gentleness he soon won all hearts, and true piety, as a natural consequence, began to prevail on board.

Among the passengers was a Portuguese nobleman, who would even boast of his infidelity, and for that very reason, St. Francis sought his acquaintance, and gained his friendship by his pleasing address. But whenever St. Francis would speak to him of God, or of matters concerning the salvation of his soul, he would answer him only with abuse; this however did not discourage the holy priest, although the nobleman would often revile religion, and swear that nothing would ever force him to make his confession. Once when the ship made a landing, St. Francis and the infidel went on shore, and in their rambles came to a thick grove of trees. Suddenly Xavier drew from under his habit a scourge, made of sharp thorns, and baring his shoulders, commenced to strike himself with it, until the blood streamed from him. He said to his companion, "This I do for thy sake, would that I could do more. But all that I undergo is as nothing, compared with what Christ suffered for thee; think for a moment of His cruel death upon the cross, and of His precious blood flowing from His wounds, and let the thought soften thy heart;" then gazing upward, he continued: "Remember, O Christ, all that Thou hast done for us, and have pity on us." The nobleman was astonished and overcome by what he saw, and kneeling humbly at the feet of Xavier, besought him to hear his confession, promising to change his life. He kept his word, and became a good Christian.

The city of Goa, in India, had a Portuguese Viceroy, a Bishop, and many Christians among its inhabitants, but the corruption was so great not only among heathens, but among Christians, that very few practised the duties of their holy religion. In order to prepare himself for the work of conversion, St. Francis spent some time in the hospitals, nursing the sick. Then he went daily through the streets of the city, exhorting the heads of families to send, for the sake of God, their children and slaves to him for instruction in Christian doctrine. The children collected in crowds around him, some from curiosity, but many because they were sent by their parents, who regarded the holy priest with great veneration. Owing to his instruction, these children became so changed that their piety and virtue was like a silent reproach to their parents. They would frequently express themselves with modest frankness, in regard to the wicked life led by those older than themselves, and often made the most hardened blush at their reproofs. Soon after St. Francis began to preach publicly, and

with such success, that the city became as noted for its piety as it had before been for its wickedness.

In other towns, also, the children manifested such a desire for instruction in the Christian religion, that they would seek the presence of the holy missionary at all hours. These young converts were afterwards of great assistance to Xavier in his labors.

In the city of Malacca not only the heathens, but even the Portuguese were sunk in vice. St. Francis Xavier commenced his work of conversion by going through the streets in the evening and ringing a little bell, exclaiming in a loud voice, "Pray for all in the state of mortal sin." There also he won the hearts of the people by his charity and humility, so that many of the inhabitants reformed their lives, and were reconciled to God. He commanded the other missionaries to gain the confidence of the people by always being ready to serve them, when applied to for assistance, thereby enabling them to enlarge the kingdom of God upon earth.

The Island of More was inhabited by cannibals, who were said to surpass in cruelty all other barbarians, and although many sought to dissuade St. Francis from going there, he went, full of confidence in the power of God. Besides the spiritual means he used to convert these savages, he would direct their attention to the volcanos, and speak to them about the earthquakes with which the island was visited, dwelling upon the Omnipotence of God, and of the certainty of Hell being their portion, if they did not accept the truths of the Gospel. His efforts were so blessed, that after a stay of three months among them, most of the inhabitants were converted to Christianity, and from being like wolves and tigers in their nature, became like lambs, so gentle and submissive were they to the teachings of the saint. The instructions he left to those who were engaged with him in the work of the missions, were, first to listen patiently to the most wicked sinner, and to assure him, if sincerely repentant, of God's mercy. Secondly—if any one applied to them, who had not been to confession for years, to admonish the applicant, to examine his conscience carefully—to mark down his sins—and to make restitution. He exhorted the missionaries, furthermore, to exhibit a cheerful demeanor, and to mitigate the severity of their reproofs by expressions of love and charity, and to manifest in their lives the holy principles by which they were actuated. He told them to accept invitations, if they thought that by their presence any good could be effected, and never to hurt the feelings of any poor person who would offer them a trifling gift, by refusing to receive it.

St. Francis never avoided the company of notorious sinners, but would feign to know nothing of their wickedness, and would sometimes seek the society of dissolute and rough soldiers. When they saw him approaching, they would attempt to hide from him their dice and cards, but Xavier told them that as



they were not clergymen, they might continue to play, if they did not cheat, quarrel or blaspheme.

To win the confidence of a certain person, he even condescended to play with him a game of chess, and a nobleman, who saw him thus engaged, would not believe that the man before him was the great missionary of whom he had heard so much. But he left no means untried to accomplish the work of saving the souls of men, and when asked by the merchants to bless their vessels, he would direct their thoughts to the necessity of being mindful also of the welfare of their souls, and would often tell them to meditate upon that passage in the Holy Scriptures: "What does it profit a man to gain the whole world, if he lose his soul."

He would never despair of even the most obstinate sinners, but always evinced his readiness to assist them in reforming their lives. Those who had been but recently converted to the faith, he treated with the kindness of a father, showing the greatest patience, when sometimes insulted by them; for he knew that it was not possible for those who had grown old in sin to attain sudden perfection.

There are some very pious persons who think it necessary to show their abhorrence of sin by being harsh in their manners when in the society of sinners; this, however, is not following the example given us by Christ, who would even eat at the table with sinners, and who said that "He came to seek that which was lost." But the spirit of Christ animated St. Francis Xavier, who full of compassion, would even go in search of sinners, and by his gentleness and charity would gain their respect and love, so that after a while they would willingly listen to his admonitions.

Do you likewise; perhaps, with the help of God, you may succeed in converting some sinner from the error of his ways; always show yourself anxious to assist with good counsel those who seem disposed to amend their lives. But to soften the hardness of a sinner's heart, great kindness must be used; remember what St. Francis of Sales says: "With a drop of honey you can catch more flies than with a cask of vinegar."

After having converted not less than a million of the inhabitants of India, St. Francis Xavier determined to visit the great empire of China, to teach the Chinese the truths of Christianity. But the faithful servant of God had reached the end of his labors; he died in great poverty, upon the Island of Sancian, having spent a life devoted to THE GREATER HONOR AND GLORY OF GOD.

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## ST. BARBARA.

(December 4.)

"Serving God in the world."

It is customary to invoke St. Barbara, when visited by storms of thunder and lightning, and when in danger of fire, and it is a well-established fact, that those who have asked for her prayers at the hour of death, have never died without the Sacraments. Very little is known of her, except that she was remarkably beautiful, and that, after her conversion to Christianity, she refused to marry a Pagan at the command of her father. She was in consequence accused by him of being a Christian; at that time the penalty was death; but she resisted every inducement held out to her if she would only renounce her faith, and died the death of a martyr.

About seventy years ago, another Barbara was canonized by the Church, of whom much has been written. Her life will be very instructive to those who are obliged to live in the world, and yet are anxious for the salvation of their souls.

Barbara of Avrillot in her youth desired to become a nun, but, in obedience to her mother's wish, married the only son of a very wealthy and noble family. She lived in the greatest harmony with her husband and his relations, and was kind and obliging to every one about her. Before her marriage, she had always dressed with the greatest simplicity, although urged to do otherwise by her mother, who was devoted to fashion; but, when her husband insisted upon her dressing as richly as other ladies of rank then did, she obeyed at once, like a faithful wife; but took care to keep her heart free from pride, and would never even look at the magnificent garments purchased for her use. Her waiting-maid was a very devout and holy woman, and encouraged the growth of such sentiments in her mistress, and as both aspired after perfection, a portion of every evening was devoted to some religious exercise.

That passage in the writings of St. Augustin, in which he says, "He whom God does not satisfy, is insatiable," had in her youth made a deep impression upon Barbara, and her entire reliance upon Him, "who doeth all things well," was shown in more than one instance. Her husband was banished from Paris, and his property seized by his creditors; the officers made their appearance just as Barbara and her six children had seated themselves at dinner; they were ordered to rise at once, and the very table before their eyes, the dishes, chairs, and everything in the house carried off. But, instead of murmuring at her trials, she said to a friend, who came to condole with her, that "They are happy days; for God is always with us in our troubles."

Barbara would willingly have renounced any claim she had upon her husband's estates—but, for the sake of her children, she was determined to make an appeal

to the courts for redress. She was, in consequence, obliged to see lawyers, and others in authority, and, as is often the case, this once wealthy and still noble lady was called upon to endure every kind of insult at the hands of those who had formerly been her inferiors in society. She was sometimes kept waiting at the door for hours, and was once even rudely pushed out of the way by a servant; but all this did not deter her from carrying on the law-suit, and every humiliation she was obliged to suffer she would offer to God as a slight atonement for her sins, and would even thank Him for deeming her worthy of suffering.

Her first care in educating her children, was to train them up for God. She would often say to them: "I love you only when you love and serve God;" and whenever she discovered any fault in them, she would reprove them in a firm, but gentle manner, telling them how detestable sin was in the sight of God. She was particular never to leave her children except with trustworthy persons, and always insisted upon their addressing the servants politely. Finding that her eldest daughter was inclined to be very haughty, to mortify her pride she would make her sweep the steps. - She never indulged the children in luxuries at the table, and always dressed them very plainly: they were obliged to follow strictly a rule for rising, praying, working, and recreation. She demanded at all times instant obedience from them, which they willingly yielded to a mother whom they loved and respected.

She sent her servants every morning to mass, telling them that it was their duty to serve first their Heavenly Master; every month she sent them to confession, and would herself preside at their evening devotions, reading to them some beautiful legend, inculcating upon them their duties as Christians, and the necessity for leading a holy and virtuous life.

Servants who indulged in cursing, or in giving way to passion, were first gently remonstrated with, and if that did not avail, dismissed from her service. Her house, owing to the holy example she gave, resembled a convent more than a private household, and many who had been in her service afterwards entered some religious order. She was more like a mother than a mistress when any of her servants were sick: for once, when one of them was attacked with some contagious disease, she had him removed to a distant part of the house, and with her own hands nursed him, doing for him the most menial offices; sitting up whole nights with him, although the room was sometimes so offensive from the nature of the disease, that the poor man would almost die with shame to see his mistress undergoing so much for him.

Her charity was unbounded; the poor were always to be found in her house in such numbers, that she was called by many the "Mother of the poor." She denied herself every luxury in order to give more to them; she had great compassion for those of the poor who had neglected their religious duties, and would use every effort to bring them back to the practice of their holy religion. Her reputation was so well established in Paris for charity, that she would be sent

for in the night by the poorest who were sick, and would watch and pray with them; like a mother she prepared their medicines, and would always bring them any delicacy they would ask for; when her own means were not sufficient, she would, in the name of God, ask money from her wealthy friends. Once, being very ill, a lady of high rank offered her services to sit up with her at night; but Barbara told her that it would be a real act of charity, if she would go and watch with a poor man living near her, and who had no one to nurse him.

All good works should be performed from the love of God alone. Unless love for God is the motive that actuates us, all that we do has no value in His sight. Barbara's whole being was filled with this holy love; sometimes walking in her garden she would pluck a little flower, and say to her children: "Even this little bud shows the greatness of God, and His love for us;" she seized every occasion to impress upon their minds the power of God, and the obligations they were under to Him, for all that they enjoyed upon earth. She would never allow the most violent pain to deter her from any thing that she had undertaken for the greater honor and glory of God, and for the good of the poor. In conversation she was very prudent; sometimes, when speaking with the most distinguished persons, she would stop abruptly, saying to them: "I did not commence this conversation for the sake of God, and now I will finish it, out of love for God,"—fearing that by any word of hers she might offend Him. By nature she was inclined to be very irritable, but she suppressed every emotion of anger, never even speaking harshly, but acting always with the greatest mildness and humility, even towards persons who were most disagreeable in their manners to her. After the death of her husband, Barbara determined to enter upon a religious life, and for this purpose became a lay sister in the Carmelite Order, in a convent she had established, and in which her daughter was Superior. It is God's will that Christians in every condition of life should be saved, this we see plainly in the life of the pious and excellent Barbara. A beautiful maiden, she became the wife of a distinguished nobleman, and the mother of a large family, and lived with great splendor in one of the gayest cities of Europe; but, after the exile of her husband from France, she was reduced to poverty, and often insulted, whilst endeavoring to re-instate her children in their rights. After successfully accomplishing her object, and her husband being dead, of her own free will, and in keeping with the perfect mortification of her whole life, she became an humble servant in a convent built by her charity. Like a healthy plant, indifferent alike to sunshine or storm, Barbara's misfortunes had no other effect upon her than to draw her nearer to heaven.

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## BLESSED ELIZABETH OF THE INFANT JESUS.

(December 5.)

"Growth in Holiness"

WHEN very young, Elizabeth expressed a wish to enter a convent, but her parents, being persons of high rank, would not permit her to do so and, in order to change her resolution, her father traveled with her from one country to another; but in one of their journeys she fell dangerously ill, and fearing that she might die, he promised that if she recovered he would give her to God, and at once she became better.

Elizabeth was fifteen when she joined the order of St. Dominick, and, as she voluntarily renounced all worldly pleasures and an exalted position, she was found worthy of receiving extraordinary graces from Heaven.

"I will speak as seldom as I can; but when it is really necessary I will raise my mind to God, that He may inspire me to say what is agreeable to Him." This was one of her rules; and again she says: "When I am distracted and can not collect my thoughts, I imagine that I hear the infant Jesus saying to me: 'Why dost thou leave me, thy light and life? what have I done to thee? Come to me, thou wilt find more than thou didst hope for; when thou art weary, I will give thee rest; when hungry, feed thee; when cold, shelter thee from the storm; when sad, fill thee with joy; when weak and trembling, support thee, and when grieving for thy sins, I will pardon thee.'"

Elizabeth fell into a kind of stupor, and to rouse her from it the most violent remedies were required. According to her own confession, she would have lost her patience a thousand times if God had not come to her assistance, and thus enabled her to bear all without complaining. Her tongue became black from fever, and yet she never even asked for a drop of water, and, although constantly suffering, it was almost impossible to ascertain the nature of her illness, as she never murmured. But after a while her torments became very great, and she was once heard to say: "Dear Lord, I am overwhelmed with affliction and sadness, all joy has left me."

Elizabeth never defended herself when unjustly accused: conscious of the purity of her intention, she left all to God. But it was the will of God that her life should be one of suffering; for a long time she had experienced the most intense pain in one of her eyes. Speaking of herself at this time, she says: "When I wake from my sleep, I look upon my pains as so many messengers of Divine justice, punishing me for the sins I have committed, by using my eyes improperly." At length it was necessary to perform an operation upon the eye. She received the surgeon with perfect composure, not even asking him if it would be painful, anxious only to submit perfectly to the will of God; she sat quietly in the chair placed for her by the surgeon, and, during the tedious and



agonizing operation, not even a sigh escaped her lips, although her countenance was distorted from pain, and the blood streamed down her face. The physicians were amazed at her fortitude, and after the operation, one of them handed the eye that had been taken out to an attendant, saying: "See, there is the eye of a perfect saint." When it became necessary to remove the bandages from the eye, it was found that blood had collected in the socket, and the surgeon was obliged to remove it with his nails, causing her more pain than the taking out of the eye itself. She could not forbear groaning, and begged the doctor to give her a few moments in which she could strengthen her soul in prayer, in order to submit with more perfect resignation. Elizabeth knew that the power which enabled her to bear pains that were almost insupportable, came from God alone; she says: "I felt then, how little good or evil creatures can do us; that I had nothing to fear, but being separated from God, and that no help could reach me but from His hands; that with time all trials would end, and then would follow a happy eternity in Heaven."

Her life was like the sun, increasing in splendor until it reaches its full meridian; she died in her 64th year, and although always delicate and feeble, persevered to the last hour of her life in denying herself, that she might offer more to God.

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## ST. NICHOLAS.

(December 6.)

"Timely Charity."

ST. NICHOLAS was born in the city of Patara. His parents, who were very wealthy, were humble and virtuous in their lives, and served God with their whole heart. They rejoiced so much at the birth of Nicholas, that they dedicated him at once to God. His mother trained him up faithfully in the practice of his religious duties, and at a proper age he was sent to school, where, by the grace of God, he made great progress in his studies. In his childhood he would fast and pray, never caring to read any books but those treating upon religious subjects. After the death of his parents, his whole desire was to devote his great wealth to the service of the poor, all for the honor and glory of God. Hearing that there was a poor man in the city, who, in despair of bettering his condition, intended permitting his daughters to lead a sinful life, he at once took means to prevent it before it was too late; he found the house, and in the man's absence placed a sum of gold upon the table in his room. When the father returned home, and found the money, he fell upon his knees, and thanked God, and at once gave his eldest daughter in marriage. The following night he threw another piece of gold in through the window, and the poor man, finding it in the

morning, cried out: "O Lord, who is it that thus benefits me?" and then allowed his second daughter to marry. He determined to watch and see who it was, so that when Nicholas came the third night and threw the gold in, the man rushed out and followed him, in order to thank him for what he had done; he begged to know the name of his benefactor, that he might pray for him. Nicholas told him, but ordered him to speak of it to no one. Soon after this occurrence, the Bishop of Mira died, and the people were anxious to obtain another true and faithful shepherd. "Let us earnestly pray to God for that purpose," said a wise man among them. They did so, and that night they heard a voice, saying: "He, whom you will find in the morning standing at the church-door, will be your Bishop, and his name is Nicholas." The next morning they found Nicholas, as was his custom, standing at the entrance of the church, praying; they carried him into the church, placed the mitre upon his head, and the crosier in his hand, and made him their Bishop. Although these honors were unsought by Nicholas, he performed the duties of his holy office with the most scrupulous fidelity.

When St. Nicholas, by his timely charity, enabled the poor man to marry his daughters, he not only relieved a family in distress, but prevented the commission of mortal sin. Every Christian can do the same, by endeavoring to make peace between those who quarrel, by aiding those who have been unfortunate in procuring an honest livelihood, in order to prevent them from relapsing into crime, and by giving good advice to those who are in danger of falling into sin.

During a great storm at sea, the passengers called upon Nicholas to intercede for them, saying: "Nicholas, we have heard that God listens to thy prayers—beg of Him to assist us in this our time of need;" and a man resembling St. Nicholas appeared on deck, saying: "Here I am." And at once the fury of the storm abated. The passengers were filled with awe, and fell upon their knees and thanked God for their miraculous deliverance. When the ship reached the city of Mira, some of them went to the church, and saw there the holy Bishop, and at once recognized him as the one whom they had seen at sea. They thanked him for his prayers, but he said: "It was not I, but the good and merciful God who saved you." Even during his life, his prayers were heard in Heaven for many by invoking his name were saved, when unjustly condemned to death.

When dying, an angel appeared to him, to comfort and console him in his agony; and, after receiving the Holy Sacraments, his pure spirit ascended into Heaven, there to obtain the reward promised to those who persevere to the end in serving God faithfully.

After his death, his body emitted a sweet odor, and, by the grace of God, it retained every appearance of life. A splendid tomb was prepared for him, and there he was laid by the hands of those whom he had loved and served so well.

Through his intercession, and by the power of God, many miracles were wrought after his death. A poor man once wanted to borrow some money from a Jew; he told him that he could give no security, but that he would swear by St. Nicholas to repay him; he thereupon received the money. After a time, finding that the Christian was fully able to pay him, the Jew demanded his money, but the wicked man said: "Have you forgotten that I have already paid you?" The Jew was overcome with astonishment, and told him that what he said was not true, and that he would make him swear that he had told a lie. The man then had a hollow cane made, which he filled with gold, and when called upon to swear, asked the Jew to hold the cane until he had taken the oath. This he did, in order that he might stifle his conscience, by saying to himself, that he had given the Jew his gold. The poor man returned the cane to the Christian, after he had perjured himself, and went home with a sad heart, saying: "O Nicholas, why did I put my trust in thee; this man swore by thee, nevertheless I have lost all." On his way home, the Christian laid down by the road-side to rest, and falling asleep, a wagon passed over him in the night, and killed him instantly. His cane was found by his side, and the deceit he had practised upon an honest man was discovered. Of course, a great crowd assembled, and among them the Jew; the people, with one accord, cried out: "Take the gold, for it is yours." This circumstance made such an impression upon the Jew, that he said in a loud voice, that if St. Nicholas, by his prayers, could bring to life the dead man, he would be at once baptized and become a Christian; and at once the dead man arose, the Jew was baptized upon the spot, and from that time served God with the greatest zeal.

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### ST. AMBROSE.

(December 7.)

"Son of rashness."

THERE never was a Bishop, who showed greater reluctance in accepting his office than did St. Ambrose, but none who ever fulfilled its duties with more scrupulous fidelity. He was the Governor of Milan, when the city was divided into two religious parties, the *Catholic* and the *Arian*; but was so beloved, that both parties wished him to be their Bishop, although an Arian had been previously Archbishop. After his consecration, Ambrose gave all his gold and silver to the poor, but to the church he gave his real estate. Upon the settlement of these personal matters, he devoted his whole attention to the management of his Diocese.

He was very austere in his manner of living. Saturday and Sunday excepted,



he eat nothing through the day, taking only a slight refreshment in the evening. He always declined any invitation to dinner, and recommended his clergy to do the same. He thus proved himself to be a true servant of God, to whom the pleasures of the world were as nothing.

Through the indefatigable efforts of St. Ambrose, the Arian heresy gradually died out in Milan, and the whole city became again re-united in the 'one holy' Catholic and Apostolic Faith.

About this time, the pious Emperor Gratian was assassinated in the city of Lyons, and his successor, Valentine, being yet a minor, his mother Justina ruled in his name. She, with her entire court, still adhered to the Arian heresy, and upon arriving in Milan, used every effort in her power to remove Ambrose from his See. This was, however, a very difficult task, as the people were greatly attached to their holy Bishop. To effect her purpose, she ordered Euthimius, one of her attendants, to hire a house near the church, and to keep a carriage always in readiness, so that upon the first favorable opportunity, Ambrose might be seized, and carried off secretly. But it so happened, that Euthimius committed some offence, and was sent to prison in the very carriage that had been designed for the Archbishop, who now came to comfort and console his enemy, when in captivity.

Shortly after the young Emperor Valentine ascended the throne, and, instigated by his mother Justina, who had great influence over him, he ordered Ambrose to leave the city; but the Saint refused, saying, "That as a Bishop he was not permitted to leave his flock, and that, in matters of religion, he would not obey an earthly master." He then entered his Cathedral, where many of the faithful had assembled to protect their pastor. A body of troops were sent to surround the church, allowing no one to leave the building. Whilst this continued, St. Ambrose told the people to sing the praises of God, the soldiers outside sometimes joining with them; he would preach to them also, telling them how, as Christians, they should behave under the circumstances. He said: "If the Emperor demands taxes, we will pay them, if he desires to possess our property, let him take it. I am willing to sacrifice my life—but I will not endanger the rights of the Church. The Emperor belongs to the Church, and not the Church to the Emperor. I will not leave the city; if they drag me by force from the church, they will take my body, but not my soul."

Soon after this occurrence, Maximus, with a great force, entered Italy and conquered it. Valentine was obliged to leave, and took refuge in the dominions of the Emperor Theodosius, who at once restored Valentine to his throne, after vanquishing Maximus in battle. While Theodosius was in Milan, a riot took place in Thessalonica, the capital of his empire, and several of his principal officers were cruelly murdered, and their dead bodies afterwards dragged through the streets. The emperor, who was very passionate, was persuaded by a wicked counsellor into the commission of a great crime. The inhabitants of



Thessalonica were invited by his orders to witness a spectacle, when they were suddenly attacked by soldiers with drawn swords, and seven thousand of them slaughtered within the space of three hours. After giving the order, Theodosius was filled with sorrow for what he had done, and sent a messenger to countermand it, but he arrived too late. When the frightful news reached Milan, Ambrose wrote at once to the emperor, calling upon him to do public penance for his sin; and when Theodosius, notwithstanding, came to the church, the Archbishop met him at the door, and said to him: "It seems, O emperor, that you do not even yet realize the enormity of your crime; your elevated position, perhaps, prevents you from acknowledging your sins, but look upon the earth from which you came and to which you will return, and let not the imperial purple with its splendor blind your eyes. There is one who is Lord and King of all, the Creator of the world; will you presume to enter His holy temple? will you dare to raise your hands in supplication to Him, when they are yet stained with blood? Will you open your mouth to receive His precious body, when, in the fury of passion, you have shed so much innocent blood? Depart, and heap not crime upon crime, but submit to the sentence of excommunication."

The emperor desired to exculpate himself, and cited David as an example, saying, that he too had been guilty of great sins, but the Archbishop only said in reply, "You have imitated the sinner, imitate also the penitent."

Theodosius returned to his palace, bathed in tears, and performed his penance publicly, as had been commanded. Eight months passed, and he was still excluded from the sacraments; his sorrow was very great in not being permitted to receive them upon Christmas. One of his courtiers interceded in his behalf, but the Bishop was firm, when, however, the emperor came in person, and begged for admittance, Ambrose allowed him to sit among the public penitents, at the entrance of the church. The emperor, as soon as he came into the cathedral, cast himself upon his knees, beating his breast, and crying aloud, in the words of David: "My soul cleaveth unto the dust; receive me, O Lord, according to Thy mercy." The people were so touched at the sight of his sorrow, that they wept with him, and prayed God to pardon their emperor.

St. Ambrose was not even yet satisfied, and before absolving him, compelled the emperor to sign an act, by which no sentence of death could be executed until thirty days had passed, when it would be again brought to the emperor for his approval. Theodosius willingly signed this humane regulation, thereby guarding himself from again committing the sin of rashness.

This severity of Ambrose towards the emperor, to whom he was tenderly attached, proceeded solely from his determination to uphold the law of God. Theodosius died soon after in the arms of the Archbishop, who preached his funeral sermon, in which he praised the piety, humility and virtue of the deceased emperor, and declared his conviction, that Almighty God had already received him into Heaven.

The fame of the great sanctity and wisdom of St. Ambrose extended even to distant countries. Two princes came from Persia for the express purpose of conversing with him; the conference lasted from noon until three o'clock the next morning. Fritigil, Queen of Markomania (now the kingdom of Bavaria), sent an embassy to him, asking for written instructions in the Catholic faith. Ambrose complied with her request. She came herself, a year afterwards, to Milan in order to see him, but he had died just before her arrival.

Many miracles happened at the time of his death, which took place upon Good Friday. According to the custom of the times, great numbers were baptized upon Holy Saturday, and the Saint appeared so plainly to some of the children, that they would point to him. A beautiful star was seen to shine just above his head.

Many of the writings of St. Ambrose have come down to us, and they are so filled with the spirit of love and charity, that he has been called the "Melifluous Teacher."

But yet, his horror for sin of any kind was very great, so that he would burst into tears, whenever great sins were confessed to him. In his work upon Penance, he says: "The sinner must hope to be forgiven, but still he must pray earnestly for absolution, and if it is withheld, he must ascribe it to want of preparation on his part, and come again, and throw himself on his knees in the presence of God, asking humbly for pardon, and then he will deserve to hear the consoling words, 'Many sins are forgiven thee because thou didst love much.'"

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## IMMACULATE CONCEPTION.

(December 8.)

(For explanation of this feast, see page 33.)

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## BLESSED PETER FORRERI.

(December 9.)

"Our Father in truth"

THE Lord's prayer is a most powerful sermon, which every Christian should daily preach to his own soul, for in saying it, we propose to ourselves the virtues, for the acquisition of which we must strive with all our power and strength.

The Christian's life consists in endeavoring to accomplish in himself, and toward others, its leading principles.

We have a beautiful example of the way in which this may be done, in the life of the Rev. Father Forreri, who was a parish priest in Lorraine.

We pray, "*Hallowed be Thy name.*" We should not only say the words with our lips, but we should strive in every way to honor His holy name. What did Father Forreri do in this regard? when he would even hear that any of his parishioners had offended God, his soul would be filled with sadness; and he would turn pale, and nearly faint when told of any great immorality among them. He would, sometimes, meet with the greatest ignorance amongst them, in matters of faith, such as neglecting the Holy Sacraments, and desecrating the days set apart for Divine Service. To make the name of God again revered by them, he determined to give Christian instructions several times a week, and this he did until all present were well grounded in the truths of their holy religion.

Being called upon to attend a distinguished nobleman who was very ill, he proposed, as the best remedy for his violent pains, the words of St. Chrysostom, to be said in an humble and devout manner: "God be praised and thanked!"

How is it with you, dear child? Do you hallow the name of God? have you His honor as much at heart as you have your own? Are you ashamed to show your veneration for Him, when passing by a church, when gazing upon a crucifix, or when the bell calls you to prayer? Do you hesitate to ask a blessing upon your meal when dining out, or to take up arms in defence of religion, when wicked and obscene language is uttered in your presence? Or, have you placed yourselves in opposition to God, by taking His holy name in vain, by behaving irreverently at church, by profaning the Sundays and Festivals, and by despising the word of God, and His ministers?

"*Thy kingdom come.*" "In the world," says the Holy Scriptures, "is the concupiscence of the flesh, and of the eyes, and the pride of life, which is not of the Father, but is of the world; but the kingdom of God is justice, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost." Where the word of God is honored, there sin is conquered, as night by the rising sun. If the love of God reigns in the heart of a Christian, he becomes, as it were, a champion, striving to conquer souls, for the kingdom of God.

In order to banish from his parish some sins, prevailing there to a great extent, Father Forreri made use of a very peculiar remedy. He erected a stage upon which well-dressed boys held colloquies, in which they would relate many instances where God had severely punished the sinner, and how man could free himself from sinful habits. At the close of the performance, Father Forreri would address the people, asking them if they would be outdone by children, in the practice of the Christian religion, and calling upon them, to lead a virtuous life. He spoke so impressively, that many went away filled with sorrow for their sins. He established three confraternities, in order to induce the members of the congregation to receive more frequently the holy Eucharist.



Every one is not a pastor, but all have it in their power to extend the kingdom of God in their families, among their acquaintances, and, if circumstances permit, through the community in which they live. They should endeavor to prevent the formation of secret societies, and the reading of books in which their holy religion is attacked, and, on the contrary, assist in establishing societies for the propagation of the faith, and for relief of the poor. How is it with you, dear child, in this respect? Perhaps you are filled with anger, if you see in others piety greater and more earnest than you yourself possess, and deery it as exaggeration and hypocrisy on their part; perhaps you lose no opportunity to inveigh against the giving for missions, and live only to indulge yourself in pride, avarice, and hatred for your neighbor, thereby becoming an apostle, not for the kingdom of God, but for that of the devil.

“*Thy will be done.*” Three parishes were offered to Blessed Forreri; two of them had large revenues, and required but little labor; but that of Martineur was very poor and neglected; he chose the latter, for the riches of this world were as nothing to one who only lived to serve God. He submitted in all things to the will of God, and no disagreeable occurrence could ever deprive him of his tranquility or cheerfulness. In his last illness he would not permit prayers to be offered for his recovery, as he had entirely resigned himself to the will of his Heavenly Father.

How many of us perjure ourselves, when we utter the words: “Thy will be done?” We think that God should only do our will, and serve us; and, in fact, murmurs often escape our lips, when any thing happens to disappoint us; very few really desiring the will of God to be accomplished in their regard.

“*Give us this day our daily bread.*” Mark well! we are not to say: “Give me my daily bread,” but we are taught to pray for the daily bread of all, and if it is in our power, to bestow in charity all that we can. What was left to Father Forreri from his small income, he gave to the poor, living himself in the most economical manner; he denied himself meat and wine, in order to give it to them. He would visit those who were ashamed to beg and unperceived by them, would leave money, or send as presents wood, corn, &c.,

He was very zealous in inculcating the virtue of charity among his parishioners. During a great festival, for the celebration of which every family in Martineur had made extensive preparations, he called upon them in his sermon, to invite Christ to be their guest, and he would show them where to find Him. After Mass was over, he went with them to the church-yard, where a large number of poor had collected, and pointing to them he said: “See there is Christ; ask Him to be your guest;” and the contention became very great, as each wished to take home with him more than one. Many who live in abundance give little or nothing to the poor, and sometimes are even angry, when they see them assisted by the charity of others, and, without knowing it, they are guilty of the detestable sin of envy. Will they ever be permitted to take their place



among those, to whom, on the day of Judgment, our Lord will say: "Come, ye blessed; for I was hungry, and ye did give me to eat."

*"Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us."* There are two distinct petitions in this sentence of the prayer. In the first part we beg God to forgive us our sins; we should not only ask pardon for ourselves, but endeavor to create a sincere sorrow in the breasts of others who have sinned. Father Forreri was unremitting in his efforts to convert sinners; he succeeded once in bringing back to the faith all the inhabitants of a place where heresy had prevailed, and he did this, not only by giving excellent advice, but by his prayers, fasting, patience and humility; the people seeing that he practised what he preached.

A nobleman once lay upon his death-bed, mortally wounded, his heart full of vengeance, and with his lips uttering the most terrible blasphemies; he refused with abhorrence to receive the last Sacraments. His relatives came to Father Forreri, and begged him to try and see what he could do with so hardened a sinner; he accordingly went to the house, and knelt down in a corner of the room, to implore the assistance of God, and then approached the sick man, who was so much pleased by his modest and cheerful appearance, that he at once commenced to relate his misfortunes to the holy priest. Father Forreri wept bitterly during the recital, and the dying man, seeing it, said to him with the fullest confidence: "You have compassion upon my body, which will soon die, take now some interest in my soul," and thereupon made his confession, repented of the sins he had committed, and until the last moment of his life, spoke of nothing but of God and of eternity.

In the second part we say that we hope to be forgiven, as we forgive others. We will give a few instances of the manner in which Father Forreri forgave injuries. A wicked man in the congregation conceived such a hatred against him, that he once attacked and beat him in the street. The people were so enraged, that they would have stoned the man to death, if the good priest had not forced him into his house, thus protecting him from their fury. This same man was afterwards sentenced to death, but Father Forreri used every means to obtain his pardon, and in the end succeeded.

Upon another occasion, he exercised this blessed virtue of forgiveness; there were some women in the congregation, who gave great scandal, and against whom he was obliged to warn the people; they, in consequence, abused and cursed him publicly, but as they were very poor, he would send them alms. One of them repented of what she had done, and said, "Am I not a wicked woman, in having abused such a virtuous man?" and then went to his house, and asked for his forgiveness. But one of the others persisted in her calumnies, and pretended to see in his charity a confession of his being in the wrong: when she died, he looked upon her death as a misfortune, for he said: "There is no one now, who will abuse me as that poor woman did."

Only he who forgives with his whole heart, as did Father Forreri, can hope to be forgiven, and if there is one whom we have not pardoned, we may be sure that our sins are not forgiven. For in souls where the Holy Ghost destroys sin, there is left a perfect willingness to forgive injuries.

*"Lead us not into temptation."* Father Forreri was not only careful to avoid sin, but even the occasions of sin. He would, therefore, allow no female servant in his house, and he was never seen to laugh, eat, or speak alone with any woman, and when giving instructions to the nuns, he would never raise his eyes. Even when a student, he knew that, if he went into large companies, he might be tempted to offend God, and therefore he would never associate with fellow students, who were at all addicted to dissipation. How is it with us? perhaps instead of shunning it, we betray others into committing sin, and therefore we only mock God when we say, *"Lead us not into temptation."*

*"Deliver us from evil."* The greatest evil upon earth is sin, and we have seen how diligently Father Forreri sought to counteract this evil; he never refused to assist those who were in trouble, he procured them comforts at his own expense; he visited the sick daily, sat up with them at night, cared for them, arranging their beds, and often giving his own to those who had none. He was very kind to animals, and never would allow any person of his household to confine birds in a cage, but, when the ground was covered with snow, would himself strew crumbs about for them to eat. He often used the words of St. Ambrose: *"Be useful to all, and injure no one."* In consequence of his universal charity, Pope Benedict XIII., has ordered the following prayer to be used, when asking his intercession: *"O God, who didst bestow upon Blessed Forreri the great virtue of being useful to all, and injuring no one, grant, that by his example and intercession, we may always please Thee, and be of service to Thee and to others, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen."*

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## ST. EULALIA.

(December 10.)

*"Unwavering Firmness"*

MORE than 1400 years ago, there lived in Spain a certain Prudentius, who was not only a good Christian, but a great poet; he has left many beautiful poems for the edification of the faithful. From his works we are able to learn something of the history of Eulalia, a countrywoman of his. He tells us that she was of noble birth, and lived in the city of Minda, at the time of the cruel persecution against Christians. Although very young, she had already resolved never to marry, for she had given her heart to God.

Prudentius says: *"She never wore jewels or ornaments of any kind, but was*

modest in her demeanor, imitating in her youth the virtue seldom acquired even in old age."

The Christians were ordered to sacrifice to the gods, but Eulalia, filled with heavenly zeal, and inspired by God, roused even men to take up arms in defense of their holy religion. Fearing the consequences, her mother compelled her to leave the city, and concealed her in the country, but Eulalia's heart was burning with the desire to serve God, and she escaped in the night.

Arrived in the city, she mixed with the crowd, and reached the tribunal where the judges were seated, "Tell me," she exclaimed, "why you try to force men to worship images made of stone, thereby denying the true God?"

She then trampled upon one of the idols, and confessed her faith in Jesus Christ, telling them, that if they should put her to death, they could only destroy her body. One of the judges then spoke to her of the horrible tortures that awaited her, and how impossible it would be for her to endure them; he dwelt upon the pleasures of the world, and the grief her death would cause her parents; he then said, that if she would only touch with the tip of her finger a grain of incense and salt, she should at once be released.

But Eulalia only replied by breaking into a thousand pieces an image upon the altar, and casting from her the incense; for doing this, she was at once condemned to death. Her heroism should teach us to decide promptly, when assailed by temptation—by doing so, half of the danger is avoided.

The executioner rent her tender bosom in pieces with sharp instruments, but although bathed in blood, she sang the praises of God in a loud voice. The burning torch was then applied to her youthful limbs, the flames encircled her head, and, longing for death, the holy virgin opened her mouth to drink in the fiery stream, when a snow-white dove was seen to issue from it, taking its flight beyond the clouds. It was her spirit, pure and guileless, for immediately afterwards, snow fell suddenly upon her body, shrouding it with a white pall. The very elements, bidden by God, thus assisting at her funeral.

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### BLESSED IDA OF NIVELLA.

(December 11.)

"The Sacred Host."

THE sanctifying grace implanted in the soul by baptism, sometimes develops, even in children, the rarest Christian virtues. When but six years old, Ida went regularly to Mass every morning, although the road leading to the church, was sometimes almost impassable in winter. She would never eat the lunch she took with her to school, giving it always to some poor child, and even at that tender age she refused to associate with any one of her playmates who indulged in bad habits.



After the death of her father, her relations wished her to marry; but she had made a vow to serve God as a virgin. To escape their persecution, she left her home, with nothing but her prayer-book in her hand. In a village not far from Nivella, lived a community of nuns, and with them Ida sought refuge; there she remained for several years, and was distinguished for her humility, meekness, and good humor. When 16 years old, she was received into a Cistercian convent, where the nuns spoke nothing but German, and not understanding the language she, of course, could not converse with the sisters. She therefore occupied herself only with God, she meditated constantly upon His power and goodness, and her life thus became one of perfect happiness. Her very presence was a source of gladness to the nuns; whenever she would see a sister oppressed with sorrow, she would silently take a seat by her side, and at once the sadness would disappear.

While leading a life of holiness herself, her heart, nevertheless, was filled with compassion for sinners; she would pray unceasingly for their conversion, exhorting them to retrace their steps, and walk in the way of salvation; she encouraged those who were pious and good to aspire after greater perfection.

She never justified herself when slandered by wicked persons, but bore it patiently, and like an innocent lamb, suffered her wrong in silence.

Her devotion to the Blessed Sacrament was wonderful. The principal reason why she entered a Cistercian convent, was because she could there receive Holy Communion much oftener than she could in the world. Once during harvest time, Ida, with the Superior, and several other nuns, went on a visit to a farm belonging to the convent; while there, she was obliged to remain longer without receiving the Sacrament than she usually did. A priest was sent for, to attend a dying woman; he brought with him the Blessed Sacrament, the nuns were present, as the house was near the farm; but when the Priest placed the sacred Host upon the tongue of the sick woman, she was too weak to swallow; he was under the necessity of removing it, when Ida, filled with holy desire, said, "Father, permit me to receive our dear Lord, for I am still fasting," and the priest at once administered to her the Holy Communion.

We read and hear much of the life of Christ while upon earth; but let us not forget that He is still with us in the Blessed Sacrament of the Altar. Where can we be more at home, than in His divine presence? He tells us to ask and we shall receive, to seek and we shall find.

When her last hour had come, Ida implored the priest to bring the Blessed Sacrament into her cell, that by gazing upon it, she might gain strength and consolation. He brought it, and after venerating and adoring her Saviour there present, her soul was released, to be reunited, at the last great day, with the body that in her youth she had consecrated to the service of her Heavenly Father.

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## ST. SPIRIDION.

(December 12.)

*"Esteem of the world."*

ST. SPIRIDION was born in the Isle of Cyprus, and was by occupation a shepherd; although leading a very retired life, he always treated with kindness any stranger or poor person who applied to him for hospitality; he would bathe their feet, if they were tired, and would himself wait upon them at the table with his own hands.

Some thieves, one night, entered his sheep-fold, to steal some of his sheep; but by the judgment of God, they were suddenly paralysed, and could not move from the spot. In the morning Spiridion discovered them—he told them to look upon their punishment as a warning, and to labor honestly in future for their living; he then entreated Almighty God to restore to them the use of their limbs. His prayer was heard, and upon parting from them, he presented them with a valuable sheep.

Once a wicked man purchased from him some goats, but endeavored to take with him one more than he had paid for; the goat, however, as if aware of the deception, refused to stir from the spot. Those present were much astonished at this, and Spiridion said: "My son, the goat does not act so without some reason; perhaps you forgot to pay for it." The man, seeing that the cheat was discovered, confessed his guilt, and paid for the animal, which then followed him without resistance.

Not content with serving God in the world, Spiridion and his pious wife formed the holy resolution to live apart, and, after providing for their children, they entered separate religious orders.

The saintly life of Spiridion, and the many miracles which God permitted him to work, called forth such reverence for his person, that he was elected Bishop of Trunithus. There was once a great famine throughout the isle, caused by the long drought; the people begged Spiridion to pray to God for rain, and at once it commenced to rain so abundantly, that every one acknowledged, as in the days of Elias, the power of a good man's prayers.

Another miracle is related concerning his daughter Irene; she had died very suddenly during his absence; after his return a woman came to him in great trouble, demanding back a jewel, that she had given to the deceased for safe-keeping. After the house had been searched through in vain, Spiridion, inspired by God, went to the grave of his daughter. Here he exclaimed, in the presence of the crowd who had followed him: "Daughter, where is the jewel to be found, that was intrusted to thee?" and, as if she had only been asleep, and was just awakened, Irene answered in a loud voice, naming the place where the jewel was concealed. All present were filled with fear and wonder; but Spiridion, turning to the grave, said: "Sleep now, my daughter, until awakened at the

last day!" Upon returning to the house, Spiridion went to the spot designated by his daughter, and there found the jewel.

The Emperor Constantine was once very ill in the city of Antioch; all that the physicians could do for him was of no avail, but he prayed most fervently to God for his recovery. In a dream, a great number of Bishops appeared to him; two were pointed out to him as the only persons whose prayers would be heard in his behalf. Convinced that this vision came from God, the emperor invited all the Bishops of the empire to assemble in Antioch. Many came, but among none of them did he find the two resembling those he had seen in his dream. In obedience to the call, Spiridion presented himself at the imperial court; but as he was so poorly clad, a servant refused him admittance, and even struck him in the face; the holy Bishop, instead of resenting the insult, quietly turned to him the other cheek. This meekness astonished the servant; but when he discovered, that the person whom he had struck was a bishop, it filled him with confusion and shame; he fell upon his knees, and asked his forgiveness; the Bishop not only forgave him, but spoke to him with the kindness of a father.

Triphyllius, the companion of Spiridion, was still a young man, and was perfectly dazzled at the splendor of the imperial court. Seeing this, the Bishop said to him: "You are lost in admiration of things that will pass away; seek rather the kingdom of God and its heavenly splendor, that will never pass away."

A servant, seeing Spiridion meanly dressed, abused him, but when told that it was a bishop who was before him, treated him with reverence; so it is with the world; a man is only estimated according to the manner of the heathens, by his wealth and magnificence. The true Christian, on the contrary, values a man for the good that he does, and not on account of his fine apparel.

The emperor, upon seeing Spiridion, recognized him immediately as one he had seen in his dream; with tears he asked the Bishop's prayers in his behalf; Spiridion laid his hand upon the head of Constantine, and at once the malady left him and he recovered. But Spiridion wished to effect something more than the mere cure of the body, he exhorted the emperor to show his gratitude to God by being merciful to his subjects, and by his charity to the poor.

In conclusion, we will give an instance of the way in which true and simple faith can confound the greatest amount of worldly wisdom. Spiridion was present at the Council of Nice, where more than 300 bishops had assembled from all parts of the world, to confirm the belief of the faithful in the divinity of Christ. A learned man defended the Arian heresy with so much skill, that many who listened to him applauded, and the Bishops in vain tried to convince him of the falsity of his opinions. Spiridion offered himself, as David did against Goliath, to be their champion; the Bishops yielded an unwilling consent, fearing that his want of learning might disqualify him to dispute with so learned an adversary.

Spiridion, then, in the most simple words, declared his faith in what the Catholic Church taught and believed regarding the divinity of Christ. When he had finished, his opponent remained silent for some time, but then said, "I am now convinced of what the Church teaches;" and, turning to his pupils, he exclaimed: "As long as words only were used against me, I resisted with all my power; but since in all simplicity the divine truths have been presented to me for my acceptance, I am not ashamed to declare myself vanquished, and I advise you all to submit to the true doctrine, as stated by this holy man."

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## ST. ODILIA.

(December 13.)

"Modesty of the Eyes."

ABOUT three miles from Fribourg, there is built upon a mountain covered with a forest, a church, in honor of St. Odilia; stone steps are yet to be found leading into a cave, at the side of which a spring gushes forth. In the cave is to be seen a statue of a maiden praying at the foot of a crucifix: this figure represents St. Odilia.

There once lived in Alsatia a duke by the name of Adalrich, who, although a Christian, possessed an ungovernable temper. He and his pious wife Bereswinda had no children, which was a great affliction to them: to obtain this blessing from heaven, they prayed unceasingly, gave alms, and made many pilgrimages. At length their supplications were heard, but instead of a son, as the duke hoped for, a daughter was born, and blind from the moment of her birth. Upon learning this fact, the father became enraged, he looked upon the child with aversion, and would not even permit it to remain under his roof, but gave her in keeping to a woman who had been for many years in the service of his wife Bereswinda.

The little one lived for a long time in this way, but was after a while sent to a convent in Burgundy, where a relative of her father was the abbess. There the child was instructed in the doctrines of the Catholic Church, but although twelve years of age, she had never received the Sacrament of Baptism, which was no doubt owing to her having been sent off so hastily from her father's house.

But, in His own good time, God accomplishes all things. He, accordingly, revealed to St. Erhard, Bishop of Ratisbon, that in a certain convent he would find a blind girl, whom he should instruct and baptize, giving her in baptism the name of Odilia (meaning, daughter of light.) The holy bishop did as he was told, and after anointing her eyes, she received her sight upon his using the



words: "In the name of Christ, see henceforth with the eyes of the body, as well as of the soul," and the first use she made of her eyes was to raise them in thanksgiving to Heaven.

Only those who have lost, or are in danger of losing this inestimable blessing, can tell what it is to be deprived of it; according to the Holy Scriptures, it is one of the punishments of hell, for our Lord has said: "The wicked shall be cast into the exterior darkness."

We can offend God by using our eyes improperly, we can even commit mortal sin with the eyes, for God says: "Whosoever shall look on a woman to lust after her, hath already committed adultery with her in his heart." Matt. 5: 28. Such a man drinks in, as it were with his eyes, the poison of sin, and we do the same, if we look with pleasure upon immodest pictures, or read improper books.

We should never permit our eyes to wander in every direction, while Mass is being celebrated, watching who comes in, or who goes out; by doing so, we give way to wilful distractions, and thereby offend Almighty God. In walking the streets even, the earnest Christian will look in all modesty about him, striving to avoid any temptations through the medium of his sight.

Job says: "I have made a covenant with my eyes, that I would not so much as think upon a virgin;" and the holy Capuchin Felix always admonished those, who went out, to "cast the eye upon the earth, but lift the heart to God."

After the birth of Odilia, the duke and his wife were blessed with another daughter and four sons: one of whom, by the name of Hugo, corresponded with his exiled sister. After having in vain besought his father to bring her home, he determined to invite her to the palace, without his father's knowledge, trusting the consequences to God. Adalrich one day had gathered his children around him, when he saw a great crowd approaching the castle; he asked what it all meant? Hugo then said: "It is my sister Odilia; forgive me, but I longed for her, and therefore sent for her to come." Upon hearing this the duke, in the most furious rage, struck Hugo to the ground; but Odilia, seeing that her brother was punished on her account, knelt humbly before her father, and kissed his hand. This action touched the heart of the duke, and, raising her from the floor, he embraced her; Bereswinda afterwards coming forward, and kissing her upon the eyes so miraculously opened.

During her stay in her father's palace, Odilia led a very holy life, and always showed such respect for her parents, that the duke openly confessed and regretted the neglect with which he had always treated her. But Odilia thinking that she could not serve God as faithfully in the world as in a convent, entreated her father to let her become a nun, but he sternly refused, telling her, that "she could do as much good in the world as in a convent by doing penance." At this very time her hand was asked in marriage by men of high rank, and her parents accordingly promised a young prince that she should become his



wife. But Odilia, in all humility, declared with firmness, "that she had chosen Christ for her bridegroom, and neither would nor could be unfaithful to Him." At last, seeing that they would compel her to marry, she resolved to leave her home, and after commending herself to God in prayer, she exchanged clothes with a beggar woman, crossed the Rhine, and at last reached Fribourg.

Tradition says, overcome with fatigue, she rested upon a rock; when, looking up, she beheld horsemen approaching, recognizing her father among them, and knowing that he was determined to carry her back, she called upon her divine Bridegroom to rescue her.

The rock at once opened, and she hid herself within it, thus escaping the danger to which she was exposed, and from the side of this rock, a spring burst forth, which may yet be seen. Odilia caused a church to be erected upon the very spot, to commemorate the event, and after her death it was dedicated to her honor.

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### BLESSED BERTHOLD OF RATISBON.

(December 14.)

"Scals of the Devil"

ABOUT 600 years ago, a Franciscan Friar, whose name was Berthold, died in Ratisbon; the chronicles of that time always speak of him as the "great preacher," who, filled with the zeal that animated Elias the Prophet, melted the frozen hearts of sinners by the fiery eloquence of his words, bringing many back to the practice of their religion. It is related that, while preaching, a bright crown has been seen to descend and encircle his brow.

Otto, Duke of Bavaria, was in the early part of his reign, a pious and just ruler, but tempted by the devil, he commenced to dispute the doctrines of the Catholic Church; he was accordingly excommunicated by the Pope, and in revenge began to persecute the priests. Just at this time Berthold arrived in Landshut, invited by the duke to make his stay with him. Berthold improved his opportunity by imploring Otto, in the name of God, to reform his ways, and to be reconciled with heaven. Soon after his arrival, a poor farmer applied for admittance to the duke's presence, as he wished to communicate to him something of great importance; permission was refused; he then went to Berthold and told him his errand, that he, on St. Michael's eve, had been carried in spirit before a great tribunal, and there had seen Otto condemned to death, and that if he did not desist from persecuting religion, the judgment of God would soon fall upon him. Berthold related all that had been told him to the duke, and begged him to take warning by it; but Otto, like Herod of old, repri-

manded him severely, and became only the more hardened. On the eve of St. Andrews, however, the wrath of an offended God overtook this wicked man, and while sitting with his wife and children in his palace, he fell dead without a moment's warning, and of course without being reconciled to God. Consequently the whole weight of his sins was upon him, and he received the punishment due to the impenitent.

When Berthold preached, great crowds assembled to hear him; a church could not contain them all, and therefore a pulpit was erected for him in a large tree, from which he addressed the people in a loud clear voice, entreating them always to become reconciled with God.

He traveled through Switzerland, Bavaria, Thuringia, Bohemia, and even Hungary, preaching with such good results, that many who had mocked at religion, were converted from the error of their ways, dissensions were healed in families, and those who had acquired property by unfair means, made restitution. The following words of the prophet Isaiah can be used in reference to him: "My words are like fire, like a hammer breaking in pieces the rock." Many sinners were so completely overcome by his eloquence, that they would fall fainting to the ground; once, when preaching against the sin of impurity, a wicked woman present was so filled with grief and shame, that she fell dead upon the spot; the crowd were terrified at the sight, and cried out, "This woman is damned by the judgment of God." Berthold, however, commanded all present to kneel down and pray that God's decree should be made known to them, and behold, the dead woman came to life and said that God had called her to judgment on account of her wickedness, but that her soul had been reunited with her body, in order that, by doing penance and repenting of her sins, she might be made worthy of eternal life.

Almighty God gave Berthold many other assurances of his being pleasing in His sight.

In one of his sermons he spoke of the book in the Apocalypse, sealed with seven seals, and which none but the Lamb could open. He said that so was the heart of man sealed by the devil, to prevent, if possible, God's entrance into it.

One of the seals upon the heart of man, is his reckoning upon a long life; in his blindness he thinks, "Why should I deprive myself so soon of the joys of this world? when I can no longer enjoy them, then will I give them up!" In this way many delay their confessions, until their sins have so fastened upon them that repentance becomes every day more difficult.

Another seal is, to presume upon God's mercy. You think, God is good and wishes none to be lost; but the prophet Jeremiah says, "Cursed be he, who sinneth on the mercy of God." It is true, that God is merciful, kind, and good; His desire is, that all may be saved; but He says: "According to your merits, so shall your reward be."

A third seal, is to doubt God's mercy, or to despair of it: this seal is greater

than all the others, for despair is a sin against the Holy Ghost, and will not be forgiven; for if any one says in his heart, "My sin is so great, that it can not be pardoned," that one doubts not only the mercy, but the power of God; therefore despair not, for if one man had committed all the sins possible for man to commit, and would yet repent, do penance, and resolve to sin no more, that man would be saved through God's mercy."

With these few extracts from the sermons of the Blessed Berthold, we close this very imperfect sketch.

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## OCTAVE OF THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION.

(December 15.)

"Consoler of the afflicted"

ON this day the Octave of the "Immaculate Conception" ends. Although it was necessary for the Son of God to become man and to die upon the cross, that sinners might be saved, yet the Catholic Church teaches us, that there was *one* creature born free from the stain of original sin, the Blessed Mother of God, and that her prayers are never refused by her divine Son.

Before heaven and earth were made, God chose Mary from among all creatures to become the Mother of His Son, and thereby made her "blessed among women."

Prophets foretold many wonderful things concerning her; the following was written of her more than three hundred years ago:

"Her parents Joachim and Anna were a just and holy pair, and served God day and night; they divided their property into three parts, one portion was set apart for the temple, the second was given to the poor, and upon the third they supported themselves. They had been married for twenty years, but had no children, which was a source of sadness to them; they prayed fervently to God for a child, promising to dedicate it to His service in the Temple. Their petitions were heard, and an angel from heaven appeared to Anna, saying: 'The Lord hath sent me to thee, thy prayers are heard, and thou shalt bring forth a daughter, whose name shall be Mary, and she will be sanctified in thy womb.' Anna returned thanks to God for His loving kindness, and in time became the mother of her who was 'conceived without sin.'

For this reason, we celebrate the day of her "Immaculate Conception,"—for upon this day the salvation of man began, as she, whose festival we honor, became after her birth the Mother of the Saviour of mankind.

We have many instances of her having appeared to great sinners, in order to convert them from the error of their ways.

There once lived a wicked man, who had committed a great many sins, but



who still preserved in his heart a true veneration and love for the Blessed Virgin. Going, at one time, upon a long journey, he arrived in a place where he could find nothing to eat; he was, of course, very tired and hungry; while in this condition, the Blessed Virgin appeared to him, accompanied by many beautiful virgins, holding in their hands soiled and broken dishes, upon which were heaped ripe fruits; the Blessed Virgin said to him: "Eat;" but he answered, "Although the fruits are excellent, the plates are not clean." The Blessed Virgin then said to him: "You are right, son, but heed what I tell you; the prayers you offer me are in themselves good, but, like these plates, your heart is unclean; therefore the gift is not acceptable." Having uttered these words, she left him, the man, deeply impressed with what he had heard and seen, became a good Christian, and from that time faithfully served God and the Blessed Virgin.

Upon another occasion the Blessed Virgin appeared to a woman, who asked her how she should live to please her? the holy Virgin replied: "If you desire to live according to my wish, speak only when it is necessary and never in the church, or concerning church matters; do good, not to be praised by men, but to give honor to my beloved Son; suffer patiently any ill that happens, and bless those who curse you. If you do these things, you will be dear to my heart, and I will come to your assistance in time of need." Upon hearing these words, the woman rejoiced, and endeavored to obey strictly in word and deed; but, just before her death, the devil tempted her to despair of God's mercy, on account of her many sins; but the Blessed Virgin again appeared, and said to her: "You have lived as I desired, I will now lead you to your heavenly home;" and the woman died, praising God for His mercy.

A monk was in the habit of kneeling whenever he saw a statue of the Blessed Virgin, and saying prayers before it, and would always carefully arrange the ornaments about her, removing the dust with his habit. But, yielding to temptation, he once took the alms he had collected for the poor, and gave them to his friends; he soon felt sorry for what he had done, but was ashamed to confess it to a priest, and in consequence suffered agonies of remorse. Almost despairing of God's mercy, he threw himself, one day, upon his knees, before an image of the Blessed Virgin, and implored her assistance; while still on his knees, he fell asleep, and the Blessed Virgin, accompanied by an angel, appeared to him, saying: "The greatest sinner upon earth can obtain pardon;" she then left him, and entered a house; he followed her, but was not permitted to cross the threshold. Before the house four men stood writing; the first wrote, "He who takes knowingly his neighbor's goods, commits theft;" the second wrote, "He who prefers temporal to eternal riches, chooses badly;" the third wrote, "Unless restitution is made, the robber's sins will not be forgiven;" but the fourth wrote, "If the sinner has sincere sorrow for his sins, his conversion has already begun."



The monk, after reading all that had been written, asked permission to be brought before the Blessed Virgin, whereupon one of the angels said to her: "A sinner stands at the door, shall he enter?" and Mary answered, "Yes;" the monk, entering, prostrated himself before her, but she, lifting him up, and divining his troubles, said to him: "Never be ashamed to confess your sins to one priest, when your innocent Saviour, in the presence of thousands, died upon the cross for the sins of the world."

The poor monk awoke, thanked the Mother of God for what had been revealed to him, and, after invoking her assistance, confessed his sins, made restitution, performed his penance, and until the day of his death was a faithful servant of God, and of the Blessed Virgin.

O, ever Blessed Virgin, we beseech thee through thy Divine Son, who chose thee to be His Mother; teach us so to live, that we may be pleasing in His sight. Amen.

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## ST. ADELAIDE.

(December 16.)

"Change of fortune."

WE are indebted to the writings of St. Odilo, who knew her personally, for the following incidents in the life of this saint:

Adelaide, although a royal princess, was visited by God with many afflictions from her earliest youth, losing her parents when only six years old, and becoming a widow in her nineteenth. Her husband, Lotar, King of Italy, died very young; he was said to have been poisoned by Berengarius, who wished to possess himself of the kingdom of Italy. To obtain his object with more certainty, he endeavored to compel Adelaide to marry his son, but she would not become the wife of a man whose father had murdered her husband. In consequence of her refusal, Berengarius sent her, as a prisoner, to be closely confined in a castle, on the borders of Lake Garda, where she was most cruelly treated by him and his wicked wife, Willa. They would often strike her with their fists, stamp upon her, and dragged her around by the hair of her head, never giving her anything to eat but bread and water.

True Christians draw nearer to God in sorrow: their whole reliance is upon Him, and He never fails to comfort and uphold them. Adelaide patiently suffered every indignity, and God rewarded her for the perfect resignation she displayed.

Adelaide's private chaplain, Father Martin, assisted her to escape with her servant, by means of the moat which surrounded the castle; when daylight

appeared, they hid themselves among the reeds and bulrushes near the lake, and remained there the whole day, with nothing to eat or drink. Through God's kind providence, a fisherman drew near the spot, to whom they communicated their helpless condition, and begged him for something to eat, and, being a kind-hearted man, he gave them what he had. During their repast, Adelaide's chaplain made his appearance, and announced to her the near approach of the Margrave Appo, who was her friend; she accordingly hastened back, and reached the castle in safety.

Adelaide, having been deprived of her possessions, and not feeling secure in Italy, wrote to Otto, at that time Emperor of Germany, to interest him in her behalf; the Pope also exhorted him to re-instate her in her dominions. Otto then resolved to march with a large army into Italy, when Berengarius fled in terror.

Otto then sent Father Martin with many precious gifts, and with a great escort, to bring Adelaide back in triumph, and upon seeing her great beauty and courage, offered her his hand in marriage, and in gratitude to him for his kindness, she became his wife. Thus we see Adelaide raised from the depths of misery to the very summit of earthly grandeur; Otto at that time being the most powerful monarch in Europe.

Many Christians, however, daily undergo as great persecutions as did Adelaide and escape from them, not by the assistance of any earthly king, but only when summoned into the presence of the King of kings, there to receive their reward for having suffered patiently. Let us always remember then, that one day in heaven is worth a million upon earth, and that the love of God for His children surpasses the love of a mother for her only child.

After living for many years in great happiness with her husband, and at all times giving a good example to her subjects, poor Adelaide was again called upon to suffer. Otto died, and was succeeded by their son, Otto II. As long as he listened to the counsel of his pious mother, his reign was blessed with prosperity; but after his marriage with Theophania, a Grecian princess, his heart was closed against her by this ambitious woman, who was assisted in her intrigues by some wicked courtiers. They filled his mind with evil reports,—told him that she squandered large sums upon convents and upon the poor. The weak son listened to their scandalous lies, and sent his good and holy mother into exile. Adelaide first sought refuge in Italy, but afterwards went to her brother in Burgundy, her heart full of grief, and suffering more from the ingratitude of her son than she had ever done from the ill-treatment of Berengarius. From that time all the former prosperity that had attended the reign of Otto II., disappeared, and in its stead, dissensions of every sort spread throughout the empire.

St. Majolus, filled with pity for the suffering poor, went to the emperor reproaching him for his injustice, and calling upon him to do penance for his sins. The words of this holy man touched the heart of Otto, and he resolved to

lead a better life, and sent messengers to his mother, beseeching her to pardon him for his ungrateful conduct towards her, and asking her to meet him in Pavia. There the mother and son met, after a separation of two years; both wept, and Otto, kneeling humbly before her, asked her forgiveness. St. Adelaide enjoyed henceforth the respect and confidence of her son, who died soon after their reconciliation.

Theophania then became the guardian of her son, who was very young, and had herself proclaimed empress. Adelaide was still hated by her. One day Theophania pointed to her, and said to some of her attendants: "If I live another month, I shall be able to hold in the palm of my hand all of Adelaide's possessions." The punishment of God speedily overtook this wicked woman, for in less than a month she died suddenly.

Adelaide then became empress, and although possessed of great authority, never revenged herself upon those who had formerly persecuted her. She had already shown her Christian charity, by taking, after the death of Berengarius, his two daughters to live with her, caring for them like a mother, and educating them.

Adelaide used the immense power divine Providence had placed in her hands for the spreading of the Christian religion throughout her empire, as she knew that God's blessing would never rest upon an ungodly nation.

The time of her death had been revealed to Adelaide in a vision, and when the day approached, she went to Selz on the Rhine, where she had established a Benedictine convent, and where she had always declared that she would be buried. She had previously resigned into other hands the care of her temporal affairs, and resolved from henceforth to meditate only upon heavenly truths; she would never answer any question concerning worldly matters, but lived in the strictest retirement.

Upon the anniversary of her son's death, she spent the whole day distributing, with her own hands, alms to the poor, and in the evening died in the grace of God, after receiving the Sacraments of her holy religion.

St. Odilo says in conclusion: "To those of her own household, she was always dignified and gracious, to strangers affable and condescending, never wearied in assisting the poor, and always solicitous for the glory of God. To the good always kind, to the wicked merciful; in prosperity humble, in misfortune patient, eating with moderation, and dressing with great modesty. In a word, leading a life of mortification, and by her prayers, fasting and alms-deeds, earning for herself a heavenly crown."

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## ST. OLYMPIAS.

(December 17.)

*"Patience in affliction"*

· ST. PAUL says: "Trust not in uncertain riches; he is not rich who possesseth much, but he who distributeth much. Nothing is more deceitful than wealth; to-day with thee, to-morrow against thee. Wouldst thou be rich! make God thy friend, and thou shalt be wealthier than all other men."

St. Olympias was the possessor of a large fortune, and when very young became the wife of an officer of high rank in Constantinople, but was soon left a widow. The Emperor Theodosius resolved to marry her to one of his nephews, but she would not listen to his proposition. To punish her for refusing, he had her placed in strict confinement, not even permitting her to dispose of her money in the way she liked, and forbidding her to visit the churches. After some years, however, she obtained her freedom, and again became the mistress of her immense fortune. Living with the greatest simplicity, and never expending upon herself any thing but what was absolutely necessary, she regularly sent to all the bishops large sums of money, to be distributed among the poor in their dioceses. She gave liberally to churches, convents and hospitals, assisting all in exile, and, when it was in her power, purchasing the freedom of slaves. She always endeavored, by good advice, to bring back to God those whom she had befriended, and by reason of her perfect humility and charity, not only in deed, but in word, her efforts were blessed by God with success.

This holy widow found a true friend in the great St. Chrysostom, Bishop of Constantinople, who, after having been driven from his see, on account of his fidelity to the faith, often wrote to her, comforting her and exhorting her to bear in patience her many troubles. After the Bishop had left the city, by some accident the cathedral was burned to the ground, and St. Olympias was accused of having set fire to the building with her own hands. She was sent to prison, fined heavily, treated with the greatest severity, and after being dispossessed of her estates, sent into exile.

Some of the letters addressed to her by St. Chrysostom, have been found; the following is an extract from one of them: "One thing only have we to fear in this world, Olympias and that is sin; in the words of the prophet, "Stand in awe, and sin not." I have never ceased to impress the meaning of this word upon your mind. Our troubles end with our lives, if we have only avoided sin. Why, then, do you dread evils that will pass away like the mist when the sun breaks forth. It is not so much the nature of the evils by which we are affected, as it is the state of our minds, which makes them appear to us either trifling or intolerable. Therefore be comforted, and never cease to call upon Jesus for help, and all will be well with you. Remember how meritorious it is, to suffer



patiently; I know that from your early youth, you have been afflicted with ill health; insults have been heaped upon you, and all manner of evil things said concerning you, but you have borne all in patience, and rest assured, that your reward will be great. Therefore lay aside all sorrow, and praise God as you have always done, and thank Him for having called upon you to carry His cross with Him.

What more need I write? for many virtues are included in the exercise of patience, it is the queen of virtues, and those who exercise it are in the end crowned with victory. To be perfectly resigned to the will of God in all things, is as pleasing in His sight, as is the performance of good works. Look at Job, the patient sufferer, and compare his good deeds with his resignation, and you will find in which he excelled, for he says: "My house is open to all, my threshold can be crossed by the stranger; I was an eye to the blind, and a foot to the lame; I was the father of the poor, I have never denied to the poor what they desired, and never have I made the eyes of a widow wait; I have never eaten any morsel alone, the fatherless eat thereof." You know his many other virtues, his kindness, meekness and uprightness, and consider then, what he suffered. In what was he greatest? in opening his house to all, or in praising God and not murmuring, when his house was destroyed by fire? The first was an act of charity, the second an act of perfect resignation to the will of God, which made him dearer to God than did all the good works he had ever performed.

Afflictions are hard to bear; but in affliction the soul gathers strength for the combat, for as fire purifies gold, so do afflictions purify the soul. St. Paul says: "Tribulation worketh patience, and patience trial." We pray, that present temptations may pass away, and no others assail us; for our Lord has said: "Lead us not into temptation," but if we are still tormented by them, despair not, but pray only the more fervently.

Cheered by these considerations, be consoled, for the day of rest approaches. Happy are they, who pass from this life without having placed their trust in those things that die with them. They go not to death, but to the true life; having braved a stormy sea, they enter the haven of rest; having fought the good fight, they go to receive their crown."

St. Chrysostom died while in exile; St. Olympias did not long survive her holy friend; bereft of her earthly riches, she nevertheless appeared in the Court of Heaven, clothed in garments of shining gold, which were her *good works*, and adorned with that pearl of great price, "*patience in affliction.*"

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## BLESSED HERMAN.

(December 18.)

*"To walk in the presence of God"*

THE saints whose lives we have recorded on the two preceding days, belonged to the rich and honored of the world; but he whose life we now write, occupied an humble and lowly position while upon earth.

One day in winter, a young soldier, named Herman, passed by a tree whose branches had not a leaf upon them; again in the spring, he saw the same tree blooming and beautiful. This little incident was the means of his immediate conversion to God, for in gazing upon the tree and its wonderful transformations he directed his thoughts to God, who had worked this miraculous change, and his heart was filled with love and gratitude for his Heavenly Father. His love consumed every earthly desire, and, to serve God with greater perfection, he entered a Carmelite convent in Paris, as a lay brother. For a long time the devil tempted him, by causing him to doubt his vocation, and to despair of God's mercy on account of his sins; but his guardian angel never left him in his darkest hours, and Herman, by his prayers, fasting, and mortifications, in the end triumphed over the Evil One, by offering all his sufferings to Almighty God, saying, that he was willing to endure them for all eternity, if it was the will of God; and at once they left him in peace, and his "joy no man could take from him."

As the sunlight upon a dewdrop reflects the brightness of the sun, so Herman, by constantly meditating upon heavenly things, became almost angelic in his nature. Every one who knew him loved him, as he was gentle and kind to all; he could not bear to have any distinction drawn between him and the other lay brothers, for he was as simple and humble as a child. Herman served his turn in the kitchen as a cook, and although the occupation was naturally distasteful to him, he did his work with the greatest cheerfulness, purely from the love of God; and in the same spirit of obedience, he would mend the shoes of the monks, and of the other lay brothers. Praying or working, his heart was always with God; he once said: "While working in the kitchen, with different persons talking around me, I possess God as perfectly in my heart as if on my knees before the altar. It is not necessary to do great things, to show our love to God, but to do even little things well, and to thank Him for giving us the power to serve Him at all. I am happier than any king upon earth; for it is the firm resolve of my soul, as long as I live, to do all that I can for the honor and glory, of God."

When Herman was once very ill, the great Archbishop Fenelon came to see him, and asked him: "If Almighty God offered you two things: to live longer, and thereby increase your merit, or to die at once and go to Heaven; which of

the two would you choose?" The good brother, without a moment's hesitation, said: "I would leave it all to God, and only try to do His will."

Herman lived to be a very old man, and would often say that he "suffered only in not being called upon to suffer." But in the end even this desire was fulfilled, for during his last sickness, the pain in his right side was very great, but he would purposely lie upon it, in order to satisfy his wish to suffer; and offered to God his perfect willingness, to experience his torments for ever, if it was His will. When Herman, or Brother Lawrence, as he was called in religion, was at the point of death, the priest asked him what were his wishes, and he said: "I wish to do now what I shall do for all eternity, to love and praise God with my whole heart;" after uttering these words he died in peace.

In conclusion we will give a few of the rules, by the exercise of which Herman became so pleasing in the sight of God.

"To place ourselves in the presence of God, is one of the most holy and most necessary of practices. To approach Him with humility; to beg His assistance in times of temptation, and when in adversity, but especially when we feel forsaken by God, and are in danger of sinning against Him.

In our devotions, we must raise our hearts to God in praise and thanksgiving, forget what is passing around us, and lose ourselves in the perfect happiness of His presence.

The only means by which we can obtain this grace, is to keep our hearts pure, to take care that we say or do nothing displeasing to God, and if we are so unfortunate as to offend Him, humbly to ask forgiveness, and do penance for our sin. Never to permit ourselves to be wilfully distracted, when in His divine presence, but to give Him an undivided heart."

It is very difficult, at first, to follow these rules, but after a while, we shall experience their wonderful efficacy, by receiving in greater abundance the grace of God in our souls and finding that love for Him will consume whatever is displeasing to Him in our hearts.

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## THE MARTYRS OF SAMOSATA.

(December 19.)

"Christian heroism.

SAMOSATA is a city in Asia, situated on the river Euphrates. By command of the Roman emperor, who was then visiting the place, a great feast was celebrated in honor of the goddess Fortuna, to whom the principal temple of the city was dedicated. The sound of music filled the air, fragrant incense and burnt offerings were constantly ascending before her in the temple.



At that time there lived in Samosata seven men of noble birth, united by the closest ties of friendship, all of whom had recently become Christians, and would therefore take no part in the idolatrous ceremonies. Two of them, Hypparchus and Philotheus, were sent for by the Emperor, the other five insisted upon accompanying them. When they entered his presence, they did not bow their heads, but kept their eyes raised to heaven in silent prayer; perceiving this, the emperor said to them: "Have you such contempt for the gods and for my commands, that you do not even bow your heads before me? Do you not know that after the gods, all power is mine?" Hypparchus answered: "Your earthly power is very great, but you have no power over our souls: for you are but a man like ourselves." "If then I am a man like you," replied the emperor, "why do you despise the gods?" Hypparchus said: "Because you are deserving of more respect than the gods, for you are made in the image of God the Creator, whereas they are made by the hands of men, I would be ashamed to call any things, made out of stone and wood—gods."

Upon hearing him speak thus, the emperor became very angry, and ordered them all to be scourged, and cast into prison.

Philotheus was then sent for, and told by the emperor to offer incense before the idol, and he would confer upon him the highest honors in the empire; but Philotheus said: "To be honored by you, would only disgrace me." "If my honors will disgrace you," replied the emperor, "you shall have my contempt." "To receive contempt for Christ's sake," answered Philotheus, "would be the greatest honor you could confer upon me," and he then explained some of the truths of Christianity to the emperor. After listening to him for a while, the emperor ordered the attendants to tie his hands behind his back and carry him to prison.

The five other Christians, James, Paragrus, Habib, Romanus, and Lollian, were all young men—to them the emperor said: "The other two are old men, and seem to be tired of life; but they shall yet obey me, and so shall all of you." But they answered: "We believe in God and His Son, who died upon the cross for us, we have been brought from error to the knowledge of truth, and from death to life; Hypparchus will not obey your commands, nor shall we, for our bodies are now temples of the Holy Ghost, and we have received Christ within our hearts. Therefore, as the servants of the living God, we refuse to offer incense to your idol—for by doing so, we should bring eternal ruin upon our souls."

"I have had compassion upon your youth," said the emperor, "and have listened patiently to you, but provoke me not to anger, offer incense to the gods, I conjure you. Your master could not save himself from the hands of those who nailed him to the cross, and your fate shall be like his, if you do not obey me, for before the setting of the sun you shall die upon the cross. Let all who profess your faith take warning, for they shall be punished likewise."



But the Saints replied: "It is true, that our Master died, but He rose again on the third day and ascended into heaven, where he now sits at the right hand of Him who sent him. Your threats against his servants are as nothing in His sight; for He destroyed Jerusalem, the city of those who crucified Him, and sent as wanderers over the earth those who put Him to death. Your gods are false gods, and we will not worship them."

The emperor now became furious, and commanded all to be sent back to prison, and placed separately in dark cells. After several days had passed, during which they had no food given them, the Emperor again sent for them. Upon seeing them, he asked if they had changed their minds, and would now offer incense in the temple; but they only answered: "You are like the idols; you have ears, but you hear not; we have already said to you, that nothing in this world shall ever separate us from the love of our Lord Jesus Christ."

Enraged at their contempt of his commands, the emperor ordered them to be tied to pillars, and their sides to be torn open with sharp instruments; they were afterwards placed in their cells, and just enough food given to them to keep them alive. At the end of two months, the emperor sent for them again; they looked like living skeletons, so thin and pale had they become; but they were full of courage. He renewed his offers to them, if they would only worship in the temple; but the saints with great determination expressed their willingness to die first.

The emperor then exclaimed: "You have insulted me, because you wish to die: you shall be gratified; for you shall be crucified like your Master."

When the Saints heard this, they whispered to one another: "What have we done, that we should be thus honored, and die the death of our Master?" but Philotheus said to them: "Speak not, brothers, lest we be detained upon our heavenly journey; pray rather, that we may this day be united with God."

Before the Saints were led to the place of execution, their friends embraced them, and begged them to ask from that God in whose service they were about to die, a blessing upon the city. When they had reached the spot, the martyrs were heard to say by some of the crowd: "Without invoking strange gods, we beseech the holy Trinity, to remove idolatry from this city, and to establish the Christian religion among you; may the priests of Satan be sent from your midst, and the ministers of Christ come in their stead."

The Emperor commanded seven crosses to be erected near a street leading into the city, and then to have kettles filled with boiling oil placed beside them. Arrived there, the emperor said to Hypparchus: "Have pity upon your age, for you are condemning yourself to die;" but he answered: "I care as little for life, as I do for the hairs upon my head;"—he was perfectly bald, and knew what construction would be placed upon his words. Whereupon the emperor commanded that the seven should at once be crucified: some wicked person, then brought the skin of a kid, and put it over the head of Hypparchus, and drove nails through it, into his head, and the Emperor said: "See, hairs grow

now upon his head, perhaps he will now do homage to the gods;" and the saint, opening his mouth to speak, died. The Emperor then said to Philotheus and his companions: "You at least will now have compassion upon yourselves, and offer sacrifice, for you can not wish to die like your companion;" but they all answered: "We pray to God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, that our death may be like his, and that we may receive the same reward from the hands of our Lord Jesus Christ."

They were all accordingly put to death, and by order of the emperor, their bodies thrown into the Euphrates.

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### BLESSED LEONARD.

(December 29.)

"Harden not your heart."

LEONARD was born in the city of Porto-Maurizio, about two hundred years ago. He belonged to the order of Franciscans, and was constantly employed in preaching; in 44 years, he gave 320 missions in 88 different dioceses.

He was very eloquent, and great crowds always assembled to hear him; many who could not even approach within the sound of his voice, were so impressed by his mortified appearance, and the holy expression of his countenance, that they would be filled with sorrow for their sins.

Upon arriving in a strange city or village, he would go at once to a church and pray for some time before the Blessed Sacrament. He made his confession every morning, in order that he might be perfectly cleansed from the slightest stain of sin, before offering up the divine sacrifice of the Mass. By his zeal, he established in 130 parishes the devotion of the 40 hours, in honor of the Blessed Sacrament, and introduced the exercise of the "Way of the Cross" into every church, where he gave a mission; he made the stations himself every day.

To meditate upon the Passion of Christ, was the penance he enjoined upon all who made their confessions to him.

His love for the Blessed Virgin was such, that he recited the rosary every morning, and never heard the clock strike the hour, without saying a "Hail Mary."

His love of poverty was very great; he would always wear an old habit, that some one else had cast off, and never wore shoes, but went bare-footed in the coldest weather. The entire furniture of his room consisted of a board, upon which he slept, a blanket, one chair, and a little table.

He was very patient in the confessional, and always rejoiced when great sinners would come to him; he heard all, who wished to make their confessions;

and once, when the church was crowded, he sat for 30 hours in his confessional, without leaving it for a moment.

He applied all the merits of his labors to the souls in purgatory; mortifications of every kind were practiced by him: he never spoke an idle word, and would never leave his cell, unless he had some duty to perform toward God or his neighbor.

Leonard possessed the purity of an angel, and his humility was excessive; if a lay brother would contradict him, he always said: "You are right, brother, and I am wrong."

After the missions, crowds of people would assemble to see him, but he avoided any demonstration by leaving secretly, as he labored for God, and not for the praise of the world.

Traveling once with a companion, they were overtaken by a tremendous storm; seeing in the distance a small village, Leonard said to his friend: "How would you feel, if we should not find shelter even there?" "It would be very unpleasant," replied the other. "On the contrary," answered Leonard, "we should rejoice at it; for the true follower of St. Francis, should love to suffer;"—and it so happened, that when they reached the village, no one would permit them to enter, saying, that they had only room enough for themselves. At last they came to a large house, where they knocked; a servant made her appearance, and they begged her to admit them; she said, that they might spend the night in the stable, if they chose. They were very thankful for even that shelter, but had hardly entered the dirty place, when the master came, and ordered them to leave, as the girl had no right to admit any one without his permission. Thus driven off like vagrants, Leonard consoled his companion by saying: "This is sent to us by our dear Lord, and we shall receive a rich reward, if we bear it patiently."

In the diocese of Orvieto, Leonard denounced card playing; many however paid no heed to his admonitions, and one man in particular, who kept an inn, persevered in the evil practice, although warned by his wife, who had repeated to him what the missionary had said. "What have I to do with the missionary, or he with me?" replied the man, "I shall not give up playing cards for all that he says; let him talk as much as he pleases." He had hardly uttered the words, when he fell dead upon the spot.

There lived in Rieta a rich lady, who, in order to avoid attending the mission, left the city and went to her country seat. A fire broke out the very night she reached there; and before assistance could arrive, she died in the greatest agony. At Gaeta, Leonard preached upon penance; in the course of his remarks, he said: "There is one now present, who, if not converted from the error of his ways, will this night die;" and in truth, there was in the audience one whose life was notoriously scandalous; he had been remonstrated with by the Bishop, but with no effect, neither did the sermon of Leonard touch



his heart, and that very night he died in such agony, that all who beheld his torments were filled with fear.

Such deaths are often sent as a punishment upon those who harden their hearts against the voice of the priest of God. We should, therefore, in fear and trembling meditate upon the words of the holy Scriptures: "To-day if you should hear his voice, harden not your hearts, for it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God."

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### BLESSED CONRAD SCHEUBER.

(December 22.)

"Serving God in Solitude."

CONRAD SCHEUBER was a grand son of the holy hermit, Blessed Klaus of the Flue. A Swiss writer says of his parents: "As the eagle, by soaring aloft, teaches the eaglets how to fly, and by carrying them towards the sun, accustoms them to its splendor; so it was with the parents of Conrad. In his earliest childhood, they taught him to look up to God with perfect confidence, and to live in the fear of offending Him." His father died when Conrad was very young, and his pious mother would often take him with her, when she went to visit the hermitage of his grand father, the Blessed Klaus.

When he had reached his 20th year, he was remarkable for his beauty and for his strength of mind and body.

Like his grand-father, Conrad became a soldier and served in several campaigns; he distinguished himself in all of them by his bravery, and by always leading a virtuous and holy life. After leaving the army, Conrad married and became the father of two daughters.

Much against his will, he was elected to fill the office of Grand Bailiff; for he knew well the difficulties and responsibilities of the position. He nevertheless, shewed himself worthy of the confidence reposed in him by his fellow-townsmen, by discharging the duties of his office with wisdom, justice, and humanity.

When sixty years old, Conrad felt the greatest desire to renounce the honors of his high position, to settle his worldly affairs, and devote the remainder of his life to God in perfect solitude.

Convinced that the inspiration came from God, and having obtained the consent of his wife, he resigned his estates to his sons-in-law, making a suitable provision for his wife. He then resumed the garb of a hermit, bade farewell to his family, and retired to the hermitage in which his grand father Klaus had lived. He allowed himself but little sleep, never ate meat, and gave himself up to prayer and contemplation. He knew that to attain perfection one must suffer, and he was often heard to say in his prayers: "Oh that I were worthy to



suffer for Christ's sake!" As if in answer to his petition, he soon after received an injury in his thigh, from which he never recovered.

The crowds of pilgrims who came not only to visit the grave of Blessed Klaus, but to receive the advice of Conrad, annoyed him greatly; and in order to escape their importunities, he went to live in a hut built for him by his children on the side of a hill. There he dwelt, secluded from the world; on Sundays and festivals however, he came down into the valley of Wolfenschiessen, in order to attend Mass, and every evening he went to pray in a little chapel, a mile from his cell, although obliged to pass through a gloomy forest on his way.

After living for twenty years in this manner, and drawing nearer to God daily, he felt his end approaching. The thought filled him with joy, and with his trembling hands he carved a crucifix, and ordered it to be placed at the head of his grave. He soon became very ill, but still advised and consoled all who came to him. He once said to his family: "After my death, you will find my right hand lying upon my heart; seeing this, be comforted, and rest assured, that my soul has reached the abode of bliss;" and in fact his hand was found just above his heart.

The life of this holy hermit reminds us of an important duty, that is to see if, after having passed the summer of life, Almighty God does not demand a change in our manner of living. While young, and struggling with the world, it is very natural that our minds should be filled with anxiety as to the success of our ventures upon the ocean of life; but when old age approaches, and our families are no longer dependent upon us for support, it becomes us to offer to God the few years remaining to us, and to spend them in His service. How many possess moral courage enough to follow the example of Conrad? How many old men do we see toiling for the riches of this world and never ceasing from their pursuits, until death lays his cold hand upon them. Others, on the contrary, retire from business, not to devote the time they gain to God and for the salvation of their souls, but for their bodily ease and comfort. The true Christian looks upon old age as a time of grace—a time of preparation for the life to come. It is not necessary to become a hermit, but we should learn from the life of Conrad to pray unceasingly, and to visit often the altar of God. The Holy Scriptures tells us of the prophetess Anna, who, even after she had reached her 84th year, served God day and night in the temple. We not only bring blessings upon ourselves by leading a pious life, but by our example we may be the means of converting many from the error of their ways.

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## ST. MALCHUS.

(December 23.)

"Fidelity."

ST. JEROME, when in Syria, was very much impressed by the holy life of an old man, named Malchus; he conversed with him, and Malchus related to him the following incidents concerning himself:

"I was an only son, and was by occupation a farmer: when I had reached a proper age, my parents tried to force me into marrying, but I fell upon my knees before them, and begged their permission to become a monk. My father, by threats, and my mother, by persuasion, endeavored to change my resolution, but, by the grace of God, I adhered firmly to my intention, and finding that no other alternative remained for me, I left my home and joined a community of Friars, in the desert of Chalcidos.

"Many years had elapsed, when I heard of my father's death. I at once determined to return home, for the purpose of seeing my mother, and to procure my inheritance, intending to divide it into three parts, one portion to be given to the poor, the second for the erection of a convent, and the third I would keep for my own support.

"When I made known my intentions to the abbot, he warned me to look upon them as temptations of the devil, who had deceived many Friars in the same manner. He cited several passages of the Holy Scriptures, in order to convince me of the truth of what he said, and at last fell upon his knees, and entreated me not to return to the world, as I had commenced to lead a Christian life, to persevere to the end. But alas, instead of listening to the words of this holy man, I fancied that perhaps he only wished me to remain for his own satisfaction, and I accordingly left, in direct opposition to his advice, obeying only the dictates of my own selfish nature. He accompanied me to the door of the convent, saying: 'My son, the devil has placed his seal upon thee, and he will rule over thee.'

"After leaving, I joined a caravan of seventy persons, in order to protect myself against the Arabs, who made it very dangerous to travel alone through the desert.

"We had journeyed for several days in safety, and were commencing to congratulate ourselves upon our good fortune, when we were suddenly attacked by the Arabs, who made the greater part of us prisoners. Thus I lost not only my inheritance, but my freedom, for we were all sold as slaves. My master ordered me to watch his sheep; this was a source of great comfort to me, as I seldom saw him, and I could in my retirement pray and sing the hymns I had learned in the convent. I felt comparatively happy in my captivity, and thanked God that he had not permitted me to reach my home, for the snares of

the devil might then have encompassed me. However he is always lying in wait for us: for my master, seeing how faithfully I performed my duty as shepherd, proposed to reward me, by giving to me as a wife, a woman who was also in bondage, but whose husband was still living. Of course, I refused his proposition, telling him, that I was a Christian, and could not marry the wife of another man. Upon hearing me speak thus, he became very angry, and struck me with his drawn sword, and would have killed me upon the spot, if I had not consented to marry the woman. Fortunately, the woman was as much averse to the transaction as I was myself, for she still loved her husband; so we resolved to keep up a semblance only of marriage, but in reality to live as brother and sister. I continued to watch over my flock, but the desire to return to my convent grew every day stronger, and I determined to escape if possible. I communicated my design to the woman, who approved of it, and offered to assist me. We therefore made our preparations, and succeeded in escaping. I reached the convent in safety, and was most kindly received by the friars; and the woman, upon learning that her husband had died while she was in captivity, entered a religious order."

We see in the life of Malchus the great evils that resulted from the sin of disobedience, but we are consoled at the same time by observing how God rewarded him, by allowing him to return to his convent. In his many trials and temptations, he still preserved inviolate his vow of chastity, and for his fidelity in this respect, he received his reward, for he died in the odor of sanctity in the community where he began the practice of all Christian virtues, beloved and regretted by all who knew him, as he had "preserved himself undefiled from the world."

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## ST. EUGENIA.

(December 24.)

"Innocence vin. Meate l."

EUGENIA was the daughter of Philippus, the Roman Governor of Alexandria, and was distinguished for her great beauty and learning. The answer given by her to a young nobleman, who asked her hand in marriage, is worthy of being recorded: "I care for good morals, and not for noble ancestors," said she, "for if I become your wife, I should be obliged to live with you, not with your ancestors."

She had read the letters of St. Paul, and was at heart a Christian, but by order of her father, the Christians were banished from the city of Alexandria. Eugenia saw them depart, and among the hymns sung by them, she distinctly heard the words, "The gods of the heathens are devils, but the Lord our God has



created the heavens: splendor and majesty is in His countenance, victory and and glory dwell in His sanctuary;" and they made such an impression upon her, that she remarked to her companions, Protus and Hyacinth, who were also anxious to become Christians: "All that is taught by our philosophers is as nothing, compared with the great truths taught by the Christians, and which they so exultingly confess. I have heard, that they have a Bishop, called Helenus, who with other holy men, living in his house, praise and serve God day and night. There would I like to go, and since no woman is permitted to enter, I will cut off my hair, put on male attire, and go with you to the servant of God."

Three heathen brothers accordingly presented themselves to Helenus, desiring henceforth to serve God in the convent; they were accepted by the Bishop, received the necessary instructions, and were baptized. Thus Eugenia succeeded in her disguise, became a Christian, and an inmate of a convent.

Meanwhile the governor searched in vain throughout the city for his lost daughter; and at last it began to be whispered about, that the gods had taken her up into their heaven. Her father ordered a festival to be celebrated in her honor, and had a golden statue made in her likeness, and presented to the people for worship.

Eugenia improved so much in Christian knowledge, that in two years she knew the Holy Scriptures by heart; she was very humble in her manners, and fervent in her piety; she shared the sorrows of the afflicted, and rejoiced with the happy: a single word of hers would put an end to angry discussions, and by her edifying and holy example, the proud and haughty would become gentle and submissive.

Melanthia, a noble widow of Alexandria, was so captivated by the beauty of Eugenia, that she determined, if possible, to marry the supposed youth. In order to effect her purpose, she feigned to be sick, and sent for Eugenia. As soon as she came, the widow implored her to leave the convent, and live with her. Eugenia rejected the proposition with horror, Melanthia then determined to be revenged; she therefore accused the young Christian before the governor of having made dishonorable proposals to her, and that nothing but the intervention of the servants had saved her from ill-treatment. The governor, full of anger, then ordered all the members of the convent to be brought before him.

When Eugenia entered the presence of her father, she bowed her head in order that she might not be recognized by him; but he addressed her in a loud voice: "Tell me, wicked Christian, if your Christ commands you to perform such infamous deeds?"

Eugenia answered: "My Lord Jesus Christ, whom I serve, has taught me to lead a chaste life, and has promised me eternal life, if I observe His holy precepts. It is in my power to convict this woman of falsehood; yet I will suffer innocently rather than be the cause of her shame."



The governor then swore, that Milanthia should not be punished, if Eugenia could prove her innocence. The latter then summoned the servants, and commenced to question them; but they had been already bribed by their mistress, and they boldly testified, that but for their coming at the cries of their mistress, the young man would have accomplished his purpose.

Upon hearing this, the governor said: "What have you now to oppose to the testimony of so many witnesses?" Eugenia replied: "I would have preferred not having my innocence established, until the day of Judgment, for it is sufficient that God knows that I have preserved my chastity; but for the honor of the Christians I will now tell all. By the grace of my Lord Jesus Christ I became a Christian, and in order to serve Him more perfectly, I have for many years worn the habit of a monk; but look upon me, my father, for I am your daughter Eugenia!" The joy of the governor was inexpressible, and all who were present were moved to tears at the touching scene. The Christians especially rejoiced, exclaiming loudly: "The right arm of the Lord is raised on high; the hand of the Eternal is full of power!"

Eugenia was then led in triumph to the palace of her father—who, with her mother and the whole family afterwards became Christians.

It is certainly consoling to see the guilty confounded, and innocence triumphant; but we should recollect, that many Saints have prayed that their virtue should not be proclaimed until the last day, although attacked and calumniated by men. How differently will those feel, who have labored to keep their iniquities concealed only from the eyes of men, but who will then, in the presence of God, the angels, and the assembled nations of the earth stand revealed?

The heathens of Alexandria, in their hatred against the Christians, who had received permission to return to the city, accused the governor of treating with contempt their idols and sent their accusation to the emperor. In consequence of their petition, Philippus was ordered to offer sacrifice publicly to the gods; but he refused, and was thereupon deprived of his office. He soon after died the death of a martyr, giving all that he possessed to the poor and to the churches.

Claudia, with her daughter, left Alexandria, and returned to her native city of Rome, where Eugenia convinced many of her noble relatives and friends of the truths of Christianity.

Shortly after their arrival, however, Eugenia was accused of having spoken against the gods, and of causing others to desist from their worship. She was then commanded to offer sacrifice to the goddess Diana; but she refused, proclaimed herself a Christian, and after being stretched upon a rack, suffered martyrdom.

She appeared to her mother Claudia, who knelt in prayer at the side of her grave, saying: "Be joyful, for Christ our Saviour has received me into the abode of the elect; next Sunday thou also wilt be called to eternal bliss!"

## ST. FRANCIS OF THE CHILD JESUS.

(December 25.)

"Christmas gifts."

TO-DAY we celebrate the Nativity of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, and in His honor we will relate to you the history of an humble Religious, distinguished only for his exceeding devotion to the infant Jesus.

Brother Francis was born in Spain; his father was very poor and his step-mother very cruel. In order to be no burthen to his father, and to escape the ill-treatment of his step-mother, he left home. A poor widow of Alkala, moved to pity, offered the uncouth-looking boy a lodging in her house. He sought employment in every direction, but as he was very awkward and ungainly in his appearance, it was everywhere refused him. As he did not wish to trespass upon the good nature of the poor widow, he left her home and took refuge in a church; he begged through the day, and lived upon the little he collected. The sexton of the church, observing the great piety of Francis, employed him as an assistant, but he proved unhandy in everything he undertook, so that he was finally dismissed.

Francis went into the church, and kneeling before the Blessed Sacrament, exclaimed in a sorrowful voice: "O Lord, they reject me everywhere." He did this daily upon returning to the church, when at last he seemed to hear the words: "Go, and seek to serve me among many."

For a long time he could not divine the meaning of what he had heard, until one of the wardens of a hospital took him into his service. Here he was enabled to "serve among many;" but such was his clumsiness, that he very soon became a laughing-stock to all in the hospital.

The warden, however, was a very patient man, and after employing Francis in the most menial offices, he charged him with the collecting of alms for the sick. Brother Francis then commenced to solicit alms in a very unusual manner; he placed a crucifix upon the cover of the box in which were deposited the offerings, and, before starting upon his tour, he knelt before it, and prayed that he might be successful through the day, and upon his return he would prostrate himself again before it, and thank the Child Jesus for what he had received.

His whole day was spent in the service of God, and he allowed himself but three hours sleep during the night, in order to gain time for his religious devotions.

He was often mistaken for a fool, owing to the oddity of his appearance, and was frequently ridiculed and abused on that account, when begging in hotels or wayside inns for his beloved sick and poor. A rich nobleman once struck him in the face, and ordered him out of the hotel; but when the landlord whispered to him, that it was the good Brother Francis whom he had insulted, he was filled

with shame, humbly asked his pardon, and bestowed upon him a large sum of money for the poor, in order to repair the wrong he had inflicted upon him.

Once again, when several strangers in a tavern had scoffed at him, and in the end beaten him, he only said to them: "You have given ME something—now give something for the CHILD JESUS;" and, discovering when too late, who it was they had treated so roughly, they gave him a large sum of money for the poor.

His sufferings, however, were sometimes caused by the very persons for whom he exposed himself to the ill-treatment of the world; for some among them accused him of dividing the alms unequally, and others said that he kept the best portion for his own use, and again some would say, that he was a fool, and not fitted for such an office.

Francis, however, confounded them all, by declaring, that they were right, and he only wondered at their patience with so unworthy a man as himself.

Among all of the festivals of the Church, that of Christmas was specially endeared to him, and to celebrate it in a manner pleasing to God, he made it a feast-day to the poor. On the Sunday preceding the festival, he caused it to be announced from the different pulpits in the city churches, that the poor who had received Holy Communion upon Christmas, were invited to dine at the hospital. He called upon his friends and the rich citizens to assist him, and was so successful in his first attempt, that among the many contributions were two oxen, thirty sheep, forty-four hogs, twenty bags of flour, and a great quantity of excellent vegetables, besides twelve hundred dollars in gold.

Over a thousand poor persons assembled at his invitation, and after thanking the Child Jesus for the bounties He had supplied, they sat down to a plentiful repast. Brother Francis, assisted by the servants, waiting upon them, and after the dinner, he presented to each of his guests a dollar, as a Christmas gift. To those who could not come on account of their age, or ill health, or who were ashamed to come, he sent what would have been their portion if present.

This beautiful feast of the poor, instituted by Brother Francis, met with such approbation throughout the city, that for the future the offerings came pouring into the hospital for the Christmas banquet.

Once, however, Brother Francis and his poor seemed to have been forgotten by every one; Christmas drew near, and there was nothing ready for the feast. In his perplexity, Francis threw himself upon his knees before a statue of the Infant Saviour, and exclaimed: "The day upon which I entertain thy guests, approaches, and I have nothing to offer them; hast thou forgotten it, O divine Child?" when immediately there came a knock at the door, and a call for Brother Francis; a gentleman then handed to him a large sum of money, to be expended in preparing the usual Christmas dinner for the poor of the city. Filled with joy, Francis laid the money at the feet of the statue, and could not find words enough to extol and praise his dear Child Jesus, but called all of the



servants to assist him in thanking God for what He had done. They then sought in vain for the person who had made them all so happy ; but he was nowhere to be found ; he disappeared immediately, and was never seen afterwards.

How heart-rending it is to see a father or mother of a family, whose poverty prevents their bestowing upon their little innocent children the smallest token of their love in the form of a Christmas gift, and how it must pierce their hearts to hear their children in reply to questions from their playmates as to what presents they had received answer, "nothing."

If there is any day in the year upon which a child should be happy, it is Christmas. Think of this, dear reader, and if possible, imitate the example of the pious Brother Francis. Let love for the Child Jesus prompt you to make glad the hearts of the poor and of little children, so that upon one day at least they may forget their poverty.

Do not let the festival pass, without having in some way been the cause of joy to the poor ; and, if you are able, give alms to three poor families, or three persons, in honor of the threefold birth of Christ, in commemoration of the eternal birth of the Son of God, who is from all eternity, God of God, and Light of Light ; of His temporal birth of the Virgin Mary, and of His spiritual birth in the hearts of all faithful Christians.

Francis had served for twenty-seven years in the hospital, when he felt a great desire to join the Carmelite order ; but the odd-looking man, who was at first ridiculed and mocked at, whenever seen, had now become so beloved and respected by the inhabitants of Alkala, that they protested against his leaving the city.

Francis applied to the king for permission to leave, but the king knew and esteemed the humble servant of Christ, and therefore tried to dissuade him from his purpose, telling him what a loss he would be to the poor, whose benefactor he had been for so many years. Francis, in obedience to the royal command, returned to the hospital, but soon after he again appeared before the king, and declared to him, that it was the express desire of the Child Jesus, whom he had seen in a vision, that he should become a Carmelite. Upon hearing this, the king at once gave his consent, and Francis left Alkala, much to the grief of the people.

As a Carmelite he continued to provide for the poor in Valencia, where he was stationed ; he agreed to deposit with a rich and pious merchant all that he collected for the poor, and to draw upon him as often as their wants required ; at the end of the month the accounts were to be balanced. A great famine, however, visited the land, and in his efforts to assist the sick and hungry, Brother Francis overdrew his amount by at least a thousand ducats ; the merchant at last refused to credit his demands, until he had paid all that he owed him.

Full of sorrow, Francis placed himself on his knees before the statue of the



Child Jesus, and exclaimed: "I have borrowed all this money for the sake of thy poor, and all my trust has been in Thee. Hasten to my assistance, O divine Child, or I shall surely be cast into prison;" and then, rising, his sadness at once disappeared. Abundant alms came pouring into his hands, and the merchant came to him asking his pardon for his cruelty in refusing him credit, saying that from the moment he had forsaken Brother Francis, fortune had forsaken him.

The veneration which the people felt for Francis was so great, that they would frequently, when he was walking in the street, cut pieces from his habit, and preserve them as relics. When the order came from the Superior of the Carmelites, for him to proceed to Madrid, the whole city of Valencia was in a state of excitement at the thought of his leaving.

When he arrived in Madrid, the King received him with the greatest reverence, and at once gave him 4,000 ducats for the poor, and promised to grant anything he should ask, if by his intercession Almighty God would bless him with a male heir to his throne. The prayers of the pious servant proved acceptable to God; for a son was born to the great joy of the king, who kept his word, and gave Francis a large sum of money.

The night before Christmas, Francis received the last Sacraments, and on the festival itself the Prior of the convent, in order to gladden the heart of the dying man, sent for twelve poor persons, and assembled them in the room of Brother Francis, at the very time he was accustomed to entertain them at his Christmas banquet, and handing Francis twelve pieces of money, told him to give each one their portion, as his last Christmas gift. This touching kindness on the part of his Superior greatly rejoiced the humble spirit of Brother Francis, and weak as he was, he commenced to sing a Christmas carol in honor of the Child Jesus, into whose hands he that evening surrendered his pure and child-like spirit.

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## ST. HYACINTHA.

(December 26.)

"The final triumph of grace."

TO-DAY the Church commemorates the sufferings of St. Stephen, the first Christian martyr, but his life and manner of death are well known to the Christian world. There is, however, another Saint whose memory we honor upon this day, who is but little known, as she was only canonized during this century.

There once lived an Italian count, by the name of Mariscotti, who had two daughters; both of whom received from him a truly Christian education.

Clarissa, the eldest, however, in her earliest youth gave symptoms of a vain and luxurious disposition, which afterwards developed itself into a haughty and imperious nature.

She only existed for the admiration of others, and her greatest desire was to marry a man of rank and fortune. How excessive, then, was her mortification, when the very person upon whom she had placed her hopes, and who was distinguished for his wealth and high position, offered himself to her younger sister, Hortensia.

Her heart was filled with envy, and her excellent parents suffered much from her frequent outbursts of ill humor. Her father, believing that a conventual life might bring peace of mind to his unhappy daughter, proposed that she should enter a religious order, and his choice fell upon that of St. Francis, as she had received her education among the Franciscan Sisters.

Clarissa, although having no particular vocation for a cloistered life, nevertheless complied with the wish of her father, whose word was law to her; and she still felt angry and vexed at the way in which her efforts in the world had been defeated.

When she first entered the convent as a novice, her soul seemed to be at peace with God and man; seeing this, her father congratulated himself in having secured for his daughter the life best suited for her; but soon the spirit of pride revived within her, and when upon one occasion her father came to visit her, she said to him: "I am in a convent, I know; but I insist upon being treated with respect, and I intend living in accordance with my rank and position in the world."

And in fact, after making her final vows, she persuaded her father to furnish her room in the most elegant manner, although in direct contradiction to the vow of poverty she had made; and once, when her sister presented her with a magnificent diamond ring, she accepted it, to the surprise of the other nuns, who were scandalized at her want of self-denial.

But with all these sinful dispositions, Hyacintha (for by this name was she known among the sisters), had many good qualities. She was very obedient to her parents, and although very worldly in her tastes, always led a virtuous life, and attended regularly to her religious duties; but it was more the result of her early training, than from any real love of virtue. We see sometimes among Turks, Jews, and even heathen, extraordinary instances of self-denial and virtue, but which proceed solely from their being naturally well disposed, or from some innate good quality. And this was the case with Hyacintha; there was no true love of God in her heart, she lived only to please herself; she would often give large sums of money to the poor, but still she indulged herself in things she had promised to renounce. Writing upon this very subject, St. Paul says: "If I should distribute all my goods to feed the poor, and if I should deliver my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing."

At length Hyacintha became dangerously ill and, feeling greatly troubled in her conscience, she sent for her confessor; but when the Franciscan father entered her luxuriously furnished apartment, he was filled with astonishment, and turned to leave without even approaching Hyacintha; but at the same time saying to her: "The kingdom of heaven is not to be reached by those who seek only the pride and vanities of the world," when Hyacintha in great terror exclaimed: "Is there then no hope for me?" and the priest then told her, that unless she made amends for the scandal she had given by her former mode of life, in having so openly disregarded the rules of the convent, she would never attain the joys of the kingdom of heaven.

She promised to do better in future, and in order to show the earnestness of her purpose, she went, weak as she was, into the community room, where the nuns had assembled, and throwing herself upon her knees, she begged their pardon for the scandal she had given them, and then returned to her confessor, made an excellent confession, and vowed solemnly to live henceforth for God and religion.

How easy it is to make good resolutions, but how difficult it is to keep them; so it was with Hyacintha; with her strength returned her desire for luxury, but again she fell ill, and this time her sufferings were extremely painful. The hand of God, however, was only laid upon her in kindness, for out of this second trial, she came forth purified, and finally cured of her extravagant tastes. Upon her recovery she gave every thing she possessed to the convent, and henceforth her life was one of penance and self-denial; she slept upon the floor, would only wear an old cast-off habit of one of the sisters, and went bare-footed.

Fasting and prayer took the place of her former occupations, and her zeal to do penance increased daily; for she constantly meditated upon the sufferings of Christ. In leading this spiritual life, the abomination of sin was disclosed to her; she saw that it had been the sole cause of the crucifixion of our Lord, and she therefore thought that no penance could be severe enough to expiate the sins she had committed.

The ground had been broken, and the seed of divine love grew and strengthened within the heart of Hyacintha; she gave herself up, body and soul, to the service of God, and went about among the inhabitants of the city of Viterbo, doing good.

A pestilence at one time was raging, and through the agency of two societies she had established, and which still exist, she succeeded in greatly relieving the general distress.

One of the societies collects alms for the poor, and for those too old to work; the other is for the support of the sick and convalescent poor.

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## THE FEAST OF ST. JOHN, THE EVANGELIST.

(December 27.)

(See Ecclesiastical Year, page 39.)

## BLESSED NICHOLAS DE MELLO.

(December 28.)

*"Fidelis in the cause of Christ."*

NICHOLAS was born in Lisbon the capital of Portugal, he was a member of the Augustinian order, and was celebrated as an admirable preacher and confessor. Many years of his life were spent in India, where he labored hard for the conversion of its inhabitants to Christianity. Among those whom he succeeded in winning over to Christ, was a young Indian who gave such evidences of true piety, that after the proper time had elapsed, he was received into the order.

Nicholas was sent by his Superior to Rome on business connected with the order, and took with him as a companion the young Indian monk; but as no opportunity offered for them to go by sea, they resolved to make the distant and difficult journey by land. They traveled through India, Persia, and had reached the borders of Russia, when they were unexpectedly stopped.

The Russians all belong to the Greek Church, and hate everything relating to the Catholic; but in the city of Moscow, Nicholas and the young priest met a physician who was a pious Catholic, and who received them with the greatest hospitality. There were several other Catholics in the city, who upon being informed of the presence of two missionaries, assembled daily in the Doctor's house, where Mass was celebrated, and where they were enabled to receive the Sacrament; the new-born daughter of his host also was baptized by Nicholas.

Some English Protestants, however, discovered what was going on, and denounced to the authorities Nicholas and his companion: the Emperor ordered them to be chained and imprisoned in a Russian convent. This convent was inhabited by monks of the Greek Church, whose whole idea of religion consisted in hating Catholics, and persecuting them whenever it was in their power.

We can well imagine, therefore, what treatment the two holy missionaries met at their hands; raw turnips and dry bread were the only things given to them to eat, and upon festivals, the principal amusement of the Superior, and of the other monks, was to have the two Catholic priests brought into their presence, where they were ridiculed and scoffed at; one of the monks, sometimes reading long passages from some book, in which the Catholic religion was



attacked and derided, and after being forced to listen to all this, they were frequently struck and driven back into their dungeons.

They had been imprisoned for six years, when the cruel emperor died, and Demetrius ascended the throne. He was a kind-hearted man, and well disposed towards Catholics. Some Carmelite Fathers, who were passing through Russia on their way to Persia, informed the Emperor of the confinement and barbarous treatment of Nicholas and his companion. He at once ordered them to be set at liberty; but their freedom was of short duration, for while they were making their preparations to continue their journey to Rome, the good emperor died, and Basilicus, a wicked man, succeeded in obtaining possession of the empire.

Hating every thing connected with the Catholic religion, the Emperor detained the two missionaries, and held out every inducement to them, if they would embrace the Greek heresy; but they declared their readiness to sacrifice their lives rather than renounce the doctrines of the Catholic Church, and they were accordingly thrown into prison for the second time, where they again languished for years.

Finding that the pains of hunger, thirst, and cold, and neglect of every kind, had no effect upon them, and that in spite of all, they remained firm in their faith, the emperor ordered them to be stripped of their clothing, although it was in the depth of winter, and taken to a public square, in which was erected a funeral pile.

Arrived at the place of execution, they were once more called upon to renounce their belief, but they refused, although the fagots were already kindled, and they knew that death would be the consequence.

Thinking that if they separated the Indian priest from Nicholas, he might yield more easily, they carried him to another part of the square, and commenced anew their threats and promises; one of their number came running in, saying that Nicholas had complied with the Emperor's demand, and had embraced the Greek religion, but the Indian missionary declared, that he would adhere unwaveringly to his holy faith. Seeing that it was useless to continue their efforts, they dragged him back, placed him upon the pile, and burned him to death before the eyes of Nicholas, who addressed to his faithful pupil words full of courage and consolation.

It the meantime some wealthy gentlemen had interceded in behalf of the two Catholic priests, and an order was sent to defer their execution; but the Indian martyr was already in possession of his crown. Nicholas was therefore sent back to prison, where he remained for another year, until Basilicus was called to give an account of his stewardship to the King of kings, in whose presence all men are equal.

Nicholas had a good friend in the pious widow of a Russian Prince, who by her unremitting efforts finally obtained his release from the new sovereign. She received him with the greatest hospitality in her palace, where he once

more had the privilege of celebrating the divine mysteries, and of dispensing the Sacraments to a small number of the faithful.

Soon, however, dark clouds commenced to hide the sun, that for a while had shone upon the pathway of the Blessed Nicholas. A religious war broke out in Russia, and the Princess Marina, accompanied by Nicholas, and her aged governess, Barbara Mosqui, an excellent and pious lady from Poland, sought refuge in Astracan, fancying that upon the extreme frontiers of the empire, they would enjoy comparative safety. But the Russian hordes advanced even to this distant province, stormed the castle where the Catholics had taken up their residence, and took a great many of them prisoners. The Princess and others who had assisted in its defense were killed, but Nicholas and the Polish lady, the aged Barbara, were among those taken prisoners.

Their conquerors then gave them the choice, either to make a public recantation of their faith as Catholics, or to suffer the most horrible death. Neither of them hesitated for a moment, but chose the latter, and soon two pyres were built, whose flames would only be quenched by the blood of the Christian martyrs.

Many in the large crowd were moved to tears at the sight of the venerable Polish lady, who undaunted to the last, preserved her composure, and calmly resigned herself into the hands of her executioners. Nicholas enfeebled by age and the sufferings he had undergone, followed her with slow and faltering steps holding between his fettered hands a crucifix, upon which he kept his eyes constantly fixed.

Not the slightest trace of fear was visible in the countenances of these heroic martyrs; they looked unconcernedly upon the already blazing pile, and rejected for the last time, the inducements held out to them, if they would only renounce the Catholic faith. They were thereupon cast into the flames which consumed their bodies, but liberated their souls.

For their fidelity in the cause of Christ, they received from the hands of the King of Martyrs, the crown promised to all who openly confess their faith in their crucified Redeemer.

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## ST. THOMAS OF CANTERBURY.

(December 29.)

Unyielding firmness."

THOMAS, in his youth, was devoted to the pleasures of the world, but although he seemed sometimes to forget God, God never ceased to watch over him, who was destined to be one of the great lights in the Church. By His

grace he was preserved from falling into the sin of apostasy, and from ever violating the sixth commandment.

While yet a student of law, Thomas became acquainted with Theobald, Archbishop of Canterbury, who soon discovered the great talents possessed by his young friend. He induced him to enter the service of the Church, and succeeded in having him appointed to the responsible office of chancellor, by Henry II., King of England. Thomas discharged his duties so ably, that the prosperity of the kingdom visibly increased, and the king bestowed upon him many marks of friendship.

After the death of the Archbishop of Canterbury, the King announced his intention of appointing Thomas to the vacant see, hoping to find in him one who would carry out his designs. Some of the electors voted against his appointment, but the royal delegates succeeded in having him elected Archbishop.

It soon became evident to both parties that they had misjudged Thomas, whose only desire henceforth was, to uphold the honor and dignity of the Church.

Before the accession of Henry II. to the throne, the Church had been deprived of many of her rights, the kings presuming to dictate to the Pope in matters concerning religion. Henry II. followed closely in their footsteps, and the new Archbishop saw clearly that it was necessary to make his choice, either to preserve inviolate the prerogatives of the Church, and to insist upon no further encroachments, or to yield to the demands of the king, and thereby secure for himself his continued friendship.

The temptation was very great to a character like that of Thomas; for the king had always treated him with kindness and consideration, and he could not bear the thought of offending him.

The king at that time insisted upon all of the bishops in his kingdom taking an oath, by which they bound themselves to submit to whatever he decreed. But Thomas made known his intention not to take any oath that would endanger the liberties of the Church he had sworn to defend at his consecration. His conduct irritated the king very much, and some of the other Bishops urged him to comply with the wishes of his sovereign, if only from motives of gratitude.

Thomas hesitated for a long time, having constantly before his mind's eye the words of St. Paul: "We must obey God rather than man;" but finally yielded to their repeated solicitations, and signed the required document.

He soon, however, regretted having acted in direct opposition to the dictates of his conscience, and was so sincere in his repentance, that he thought himself no longer worthy to offer up the holy sacrifice of the Mass, and accordingly sent a minute report of all that had happened to the Pope, begging to be absolved. The Pope, in reply, told him that he was convinced that he had acted without



bad intentions, and addressed to him words of consolation, advising him to resume the duties of his office.

The repentant Archbishop soon made amends for what he had done in a moment of weakness, by henceforth opposing, with unwavering firmness, all the encroachments of the king upon the rights of the Church.

The king, in consequence, ordered his arrest for the crime of high treason, and Thomas, knowing that he could not discharge his episcopal functions if imprisoned, escaped to France. Henry demanded of the king of France the immediate return of the Archbishop, but Louis VII. plainly told the English ambassadors, that no king possessed the power either to make or unmake priests, much less Archbishops, and received Thomas with the greatest kindness. Louis then sent him, at his own request, to the Pope, Alexander III., who was then residing in France.

Thomas made to the Holy Father a true statement of the affairs of the Church in England, and expressed his wish to resign his office; but the Pope would not receive his resignation, saying that he approved of all that he had done in the discharge of his duties.

The Archbishop then retired to a Cistercian convent, there to remain until circumstances would permit his resuming the episcopal office. But even there did the malignity of Henry follow him; for the king threatened to banish from England every member of the order, if Thomas was permitted to reside any longer in the convent of Pontigni, and rather than be the cause of trouble to the good monks, the Archbishop left his asylum.

It is not necessary to give here a full history of the struggles of the Catholic Church in England with her oppressors, the kings; it will suffice to state, that Thomas was finally enabled to return to his see of Canterbury.

After his arrival, however, he found that Henry was still filled with hatred against him, and that those Bishops, who had made themselves the tools of the king, by yielding to him, were in constant fear of being excommunicated by their Archbishop. Some of the nobles, also, who had possessed themselves of property belonging to the Church, and which they were determined to retain, dreaded the sentence which they knew Thomas would pass upon them. Although he had nerved himself for the contest, by praying humbly for the assistance of God, the heart of Thomas was filled with gloomy forebodings.

In the course of his sermon, preached upon Christmas, he said, that the Church of Canterbury, already numbered one Bishop among its martyrs, and that it soon would have another; the whole congregation burst into tears, and he himself could not refrain from weeping.

Thomas excommunicated three Bishops, who had allowed the king to trespass upon the privileges of the Church, and they complained against him to the king. Henry became furious, and declared that he could find no one to defend



his honor and dignity, when attacked by "Thomas, the low-born priest," as he called the Archbishop.

Four of his chamberlains then determined to take the life of Thomas, in order to ingratiate themselves with the King, and for that purpose, secretly entered his house, and threatened to kill him, if he did not immediately revoke the sentence of excommunication; but Thomas calmly replied: "No one shall receive absolution who does not repent." The priests who were with him at the time, forced him to take refuge in the Cathedral, believing that once in the Sanctuary, he was safe from any danger; but when they attempted to fasten the doors, he forbade them. The assassins then rushed into the church, and repeated their demands; but the Archbishop only said: "I shall not absolve them, unless restitution is made; I am ready to die, if by the shedding of my blood, the peace and freedom of the Church is secured." He was then struck upon the head with a drawn sword by one of them, and after wiping the blood from his face, he said: "Into thy hands, O Lord, I commend my spirit;" when all four attacked him, and he fell dead at the foot of the altar, pierced through by their swords. The murderers then searched his house and put to death a young servant of the Archbishop, whom they found weeping for the fate of his master.

The world may think that by making a few concessions, the life of Thomas might have been prolonged; but subsequent events proved that Thomas, by his death, gained more for the Church, than if he had, at the expense of her liberties, lived for a thousand years; for the King, upon hearing of the murder of the Archbishop, was overcome with sorrow, and refused, for the space of three days, to see any member of his court.

For fear that the Pope might excommunicate him, and accuse him of instigating the death of the Archbishop, he restored to the Church all her ancient rights and privileges, for the maintenance of which St. Thomas had struggled and died.

Many miracles, that took place at the tomb of the martyr, caused his canonization three years after his death.

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## ST. ANYSIA.

(December 30.)

"Dangers of youth"

ANYSIA was born in the city of Thessalonica, during the reign of the cruel Emperor Maximinian. Her parents were very wealthy and pious, and brought

her up in the fear of God. She grew daily in virtue; even in her childhood she was remarkable for the gravity and modesty of her demeanor, and the purity of her soul was reflected in her beautiful face.

Her greatest pleasure was in meditating upon the love of God, and her only dread was that of offending Him. She was frequently heard to exclaim: "O, the dangerous season of youth! either misleading others, or misled; O, happy old age! the thought fills me with sadness when I reflect upon the length of time that separates me from heaven."

We, on the contrary, look upon the time of youth as the happiest period of our lives, and would like to remain always young. But we should remember how easy it is to fall into sin, from want of judgment or experience, and by thinking that the end of life is far distant. How many upon the bed of death have regretted the sins committed in youth; and, in fear and trembling, besought God to pardon them.

Anysia had very little intercourse with the world, in order to avoid its snares, but frequented the Holy Sacraments, thus preparing herself for the joys of the world to come.

Who has not remarked the difference between those who spend their lives in serving God, and those who give themselves up to the pleasures and temptations of the world? With the one, there is perfect peace, with the other, a restless desire for something to divert their minds from the thought of death.

Anysia gave to the poor the immense wealth she inherited from her parents, and lived by the labor of her hands. Her constant prayer was, that God would preserve within her heart the desire to serve Him as a virgin. She went every day to comfort and console those who were imprisoned, and to visit the sick; her appearance in the prisons and hospitals was hailed as that of an angel, and, although wearied when night came, she only permitted herself a few hours rest upon the bare floor, for she would say: "It is not well for me to slumber, when my enemy is on the watch."

The emperor Maximinian soon became tired of witnessing the glorious deaths of so many Christian martyrs, and therefore, issued a decree, outlawing all who refused to worship the gods, and sanctioned the killing of any Christian. The number of deaths, in consequence among them, was immense, thus fulfilling the prophetic words: "Because for Thy sake we are killed all the day long: we are counted as sheep for the slaughter." Psalm 43: 22.

Anysia was on her way to Mass, when a soldier of the emperor accosted her, for he saw that she was very beautiful, and asked her where she was going. Conscious at once of his base purpose, Anysia made the sign of the cross upon her forehead; but, as if maddened at the sight, he caught her by the arm, repeating his question; and the trembling innocent, thinking that a "soft answer would turn away wrath," said: "I am an humble servant of Jesus Christ, and am on my way to His holy temple." But the soldier, filled with

rage, exclaimed: "I will not permit thee to proceed; thou shalt go with me, and offer sacrifice to the gods, for to-day we celebrate the feast of Jupiter, the God of the sun."

He then threw back her veil; Anyisia resisted his efforts, saying: "Christ will punish thee;" but she had scarcely uttered the Holy Name, when she fell dead, pierced through by the sword of an idolatrous soldier, dying for the sake of Him, who had died for her.

## ST. FRANCIS REGIS.

(December 31.)

"Holiness."

INSTEAD of writing the life of St. Francis Regis, we will speak of some of the admirable virtues he possessed, and it would be well for us to follow in his footsteps, in order to gain, as he did, the reward promised by Almighty God to all who serve Him faithfully.

St. Francis Regis was a member of the society of Jesus, and the great success he had in converting sinners, the wonderful power of his prayers, his eloquence, and the many miracles which he performed, must all be ascribed to the holiness of his life, which made him so pleasing in the sight of God, who assisted him in all that he undertook, "for the greater honor and glory of God."

In order to acquire true holiness, we must cultivate a sincere love for God within our hearts, and to nourish and strengthen the growth of this virtue, we must have constant recourse to prayer. Look at the Saints who have spent their lives in prayer, and in doing God's holy will in all things; for he who loves God, will keep His commandments. It was this holy love that animated St. Francis Regis, when he offered to go and preach the Gospel to the heathens, although conscious that a martyr's fate would be his portion; and it was the love of God, that made him say to a wicked man, who blasphemed God in his presence: "I would rather have thee pierce me with thy sword, than hear thee take the Holy Name in vain."

St. Francis Regis displayed extraordinary zeal in endeavoring to save souls, and in *all works of charity*; he would encourage those to persevere who were striving after greater perfection, by speaking to them of the promised joys of Heaven. A distinguished nobleman who knew the Saint describes him thus: "His heart was full of compassion for all men; day and night would he be seen visiting the cells of those imprisoned the wards of hospitals, although filled with contagion, and the dwellings of the poor. He would humble himself to the rich, in order to obtain alms for the poor, and when his brother once



reproached him for doing so, the Saint replied: "The poor are my children, my treasures, and the joy of my heart; my only pride is in serving them, for thereby I serve Jesus Christ."

Kind and liberal as was St. Francis Regis to others, upon himself he rigidly exercised the great virtue of *self-denial*; he always wore an old habit, and took the discipline every night; he always slept upon the bare floor, and never ate anything but bread and water. He never hesitated to expose himself to the severest cold, or to storms of rain, when upon his missionary travels; and when suffering from the pains of hunger and thirst, he would say: "It is my greatest consolation that I am permitted to suffer for the sake of Christ." And he was also very careful to suppress within his heart the slightest feeling of anger or dissatisfaction, always showing himself kind and forbearing, even when grossly insulted. He was once attacked by an officer, from whose wicked snares he had rescued a poor woman, and who, in his rage, threatened to kill St. Francis; but perfectly calm, the Saint said to him: "Before you take my life, allow me a few minutes, in which to think of God;" and, after commending his soul to his Heavenly Father, he quietly said, without a trace of fear in his countenance: "Now do with me as you like; my heart is filled with the desire of dying for Christ." The officer was so astonished at the courage and piety of the holy missionary, that he fell on his knees before him, asking him with tears, to bestow upon him not only his pardon but his blessing.

He manifested *his humility*, by avoiding all honors or distinctions of any kind, and would, when treated with contempt, bear it in silence. Although of noble birth, and endowed with great talents, he hesitated for some time, before accepting the dignity of the priesthood, saying, that all he asked for was to serve as a lay-brother in the community. It was very disagreeable to him to be praised for anything that he had done, and sometimes, when unjustly reprimanded, he refused to justify himself, or to permit his friends to do so for him, by declaring to them that it was his delight to share the ignominy and sufferings of Christ.

His greatest enemies never attacked his *purity*, for *that* was above all reproach; but not satisfied with being himself chaste, he used every effort in his power, to induce those who were sunk in vice to reform their lives, and not unfrequently his very appearance would induce those who indulged in sinful excesses, to amend their lives.

*His devotion to the Mother of God* was very great; for as his heart was consumed with love for her divine Son, how could he refuse to venerate the Immaculate Mother of his Lord? In his sermons he always enjoined upon his hearers the necessity for imitating her purity, her humility, her patience and fidelity, and her perfect submission to the will of God.

In consequence of this tender love for the Holy Virgin, which he not only felt himself, but inculcated upon others, the Blessed Mother never left him during his agony, and when dying, the heavens seemed to be opened for him;

turning to his attendant he exclaimed: "Oh, my brother, with what happiness and joy do I resign my life; I see Jesus and Mary waiting to accompany me to the blissful abode of the saints;" and immediately after uttering these words, his pure spirit ascended into heaven.

With this slight sketch of the virtues possessed by one of the many Saints of the Catholic Church, we come to the end of the old year. To-morrow we begin to struggle with the trials and temptations of a new one, and before the close of another, death may perhaps overtake us. Let us, then, strive to make it in reality a holy and a happy New Year, let us follow in the footsteps of the Saints, whose lives you have read in the Legends we have placed before you. Like them, let us resolve to be fervent in our piety, to frequent the Sacraments, and to grow daily in holiness.

And may God preserve and guide us in the narrow path of Christian duty, and grant that we may all one day be thought worthy of joining the glorious company of Saints and Martyrs, greeting each other with the beautiful salutation of "PRAISE BE TO JESUS CHRIST, NOW AND FOR EVER. AMEN."

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## FEAST OF THE CIRCUMCISION OF OUR LORD.

(January 1.)

The *Introit of the Mass* is the same as in the third Mass at Christmas.

### PRAYER.

“O God, who by the fruitful virginity of blessed Mary, hast bestowed on mankind the rewards of eternal salvation, grant, we beseech thee, that we may experience her intercession for us, by whom we have been found worthy to receive the Author of life, our Lord Jesus.”

*Epistle.*—(The same as the first Mass at Christmas.)

GOSPEL. (Luke 2: 21.)

At that time: “After eight days were accomplished that the child should be circumcised: his name was called JESUS, which was called by the angel, before he was conceived in the womb.”

The law of circumcision was instituted by God himself in the days of Abraham, as a mark of the covenant which He had made with him and his seed, the Israelites, saying: “This is my covenant which you shall observe, between me and you, and thy seed after thee: all the male kind of you shall be circumcised. An infant of eight days old shall be circumcised among you, every male child in your generations.” (Genesis 17: 10—12.)

The circumcision of the old law, therefore, was a sign belonging to the chosen people of God; it was the type of holy Baptism, instituted by Christ in the new law, and which it is necessary for those to receive, who wish to become members of His church, and children of God.

The Son of God, although the law-giver himself, and not bound to the observance of any law, submitted to all of the laws, and among them, to that of circumcision. The holy Fathers adduce several reasons why our Saviour submitted to this rite:



1. He wished to give to His brethren upon earth an example of perfect submission to all of the precepts of the Church.

2. He desired, even as a child to begin the work of redemption; and, as a child He commenced to suffer for the sins of the world, by shedding His blood when only eight days old.

3. To take from the Jews the slightest pretense they might offer for not recognizing Him, and one which they might have given, if He had not been circumcised.

4. To prove His humanity, and to confound those heretics who maintained that He had never become man, and consequently could not suffer in the flesh.

5. By taking upon Himself the yoke of the law, He liberated man from the servitude of the old law, for according to St. Paul, "When the fullness of the time was come, God sent his Son, made of a woman, made under the law; that He might redeem them who were under the law; that we might receive the adoption of sons." Gal 4: 4, 5.

St. Bernard says, speaking of the circumcision of our Lord: "The Son of God, in becoming man and subjecting Himself to the laws by which fallen man was to be redeemed humbled Himself far beneath them. What an example of humility does He not give us? He submitted to the rite of circumcision, although incapable of sinning, for was not God His father, and an immaculate Virgin His mother, who could not bring forth a child in sin."

Our Saviour received his name at His circumcision, according to the Jewish law, and as the angel Gabriel had foretold: "His name was called Jesus," a name which expresses the whole object of the Incarnation of Christ, for "Jesus" means *Saviour*, *Redeemer*. Mention is made in the Old Testament of two others who possessed the same name, Joshua (meaning Jesus), the successor of Moses, who led the Israelites into the promised land, and Jesus, the son of Sirach, who wrote the book of Ecclesiasticus.

The names of these men, however, were not given to them for the same purpose for which our Saviour received His; writing upon this subject, St. Bernard says: "His was not the shadow of a great name, as was theirs, but He fulfilled its signification in His life and death."

There is a day set apart by the Church for the special veneration of this holy Name, and its wonderful power and efficacy is then fully explained.

The Feast of the Circumcision of our Lord, is the first day of the civil year, as the first Sunday in Advent commences the Ecclesiastical. New Year's day should be to the Christian one of meditation; let him think how quickly the old year has passed away, how many opportunities he has neglected of serving God, and then let him make a firm resolution to do better for the coming year. But how seldom is this great day spent in such a manner; it is almost universally considered a day of frolic, and sometimes given up to rioting of the worst description. How beautiful is the custom of wishing one another a "Happy New

Year," an expression full of love and charity for our friends; how many who had previously cherished feelings of enmity in their hearts towards their neighbor, have by the use of these few simple words, been reconciled!

The Pagans devoted the first day of the year to the worship of their false gods, and committed many excesses in its observance. The Catholic Church, on the contrary, forbade the desecration of a day sanctified by the Circumcision of the Lord, and in order to prevent such transgressions, instituted the custom of fasting and praying upon that day. The words of St. Augustin, treating upon the proper celebration of this feast, are worthy of attention; he says: "Is it possible that you, as Christians, imitate Pagan usages? Does your faith teach you to act thus? Are your amusements in keeping with the precepts of your holy religion? See, rather, how a good Christian should observe this festival. The *Pagans*, from superstitious motives, give presents to one another, *you* should give alms to the poor; *they* meet together for the purpose of dancing and singing immoral songs, *you* should spend the day in pious meditation, and in singing the praises of God; *they* frequent theatres, *you* should visit the temple of the Most High; *they* drink and eat to excess on this day, *you* should sanctify the commencement of the year by fasting, and begging God to be with you in the many trials and temptations that may be in store for you. Let us then, place ourselves under the shadow of the Holy Name of Jesus, remembering the words of St. Paul: "All whatsoever you do in word or in work, all things do ye in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, giving thanks to God and the Father by him." (Coloss. 3: 17.)

If we commence the new year in this manner, it will truly be a happy one for us.

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## VIGIL OF THE EPIPHANY.

(January 5.)

*The Introit of the Mass, the Prayer, and Epistle* are the same as on the Sunday after Christmas.

GOSPEL.—Matt. 2: 19 23.

"At that time: when Herod was dead, behold an Angel of the Lord appeared in sleep to Joseph in Egypt. Saying: "Arise, and take the child and his mother, and go into the land of Israel. For they are dead that sought the life of the child. Who arose, and took the child and his mother, and came into the land of Israel. But hearing that Archelaus reigned in Judea in the room of Herod his father, he was afraid to go thither: and being warned in sleep retired

into the quarters of Galilee. And coming he dwelt in a city called Nazareth: that it might be fulfilled which was said by the prophets: That he shall be called a Nazarite."

Herod, who commanded the putting to death of the Holy Innocents, died soon after issuing the order, the measure of his iniquities being filled. And he died as he had lived, having been attacked by a loathsome disease, which defied the skill of the physicians. In his agony he called for a knife, in order to put an end to his sufferings, but his attendants would not comply with his wishes. In his death were fulfilled the words of the royal prophet: "The death of the wicked is very evil." (Ps. 33: 22.)

After the death of the cruel Herod, all danger being removed, the Holy Family returned to their homes; but, learning that Archelaus, the successor of Herod, was as wicked as his father, they left for Nazareth; and from this fact, as it was a small village, was the Saviour often called in contempt by His enemies, "the Nazarene;" for the proud Pharisees and Scribes hated all who came from Nazareth. The word "Nazareth," means "holy"—"he that is dedicated to God." Those who were dedicated, refrained from the use of wine, and wore their hair long.

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## EPIPHANY, OR THE FEAST OF THE MAGI.

(January 6.)

THE Catholic Church celebrates on this day the threefold mysteries of 1. *the Adoration of the Infant Saviour*, by the Magi of the East, 2. *the Baptism of Christ* in the river Jordan, when he was declared by the Father and the Holy Ghost to be the Son of God, and, 3. *the working of His first miracle* at the wedding feast in Cana, when for the first time He manifested His Divine power. But our attention is particularly called to the contemplation of the first of these mysteries, "*The adoration of the Magi*," which Festival is also called "*The Feast of the Three Kings*."

This Festival is next in importance to the three principal Feasts of the Ecclesiastical year.

It has an octave, and the six Sundays following it derive their name and origin from it; with it the Feast of Christmas is also intimately connected.

The Festival of the Epiphany reminds us of the manifestation of the new-born Saviour to the Gentiles, as represented in the persons of the Magi, as was the calling of the shepherds an example for the Jews to follow.



## INTROIT OF THE MASS.

"Behold the Lord the Ruler is come, and a kingdom in His hand, and power and dominion." (Mal. 3). "Give to the king thy judgment, O God: and to the king's son thy justice." (Ps. 71: 2.)

The Church in these words expresses her joy, that Christ is born, and begs of God to give unto His Son all power.

## PRAYER.

"O God, who didst on this day reveal Thy only-begotten Son to the Gentiles by the guidance of a star, grant in Thy mercy that we who know Thee now by faith, may be brought to behold the beauty of Thy majesty. Through the same Lord."

## EPISTLE.—Isaiah 60: 1—6.

"Arise, be enlightened, O Jerusalem: for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee. For behold darkness shall cover the earth, and a mist the people: but the Lord shall arise upon thee, and his glory shall be seen upon thee. And the Gentiles shall walk in thy light, and kings in the brightness of thy rising. Lift up thy eyes round about, and see: all these are gathered together, they are come to thee: thy sons shall come from afar, and thy daughters shall rise up at thy side. Then shalt thou see, and abound, and thy heart shall wonder and be enlarged, when the multitude of the sea shall be converted to thee, the strength of the Gentiles shall come to thee. The multitude of camels shall cover thee, the dromedaries of Madian and Ephraim: all they from Saba shall come, bringing gold and frankincense: and shewing forth praise to the Lord."

The Prophet here speaks of the glory of the new Jerusalem, that is, the Church of Christ, into whose fold should be gathered people from the East and from the West, and whose darkness should be enlightened by the rising of the Sun of Justice.

This prophecy is very appropriately recalled to us; for it was upon this day fulfilled, in the coming of the Magi to adore the new-born Saviour.

## GOSPEL.—Matt. 2. 1-12.

"When Jesus therefore was born in Bethlehem of Juda, in the days of king Herod, behold, there came wise men from the East to Jerusalem. Saying: Where is he that is born King of the Jews? For we have seen his star in the East, and are come to adore him. And king Herod hearing this, was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him. And assembling together all the chief priests and the scribes of the people, he inquired of them where Christ should be born. But



they said to him: In Bethlehem of Juda. For so it is written by the prophet: "And thou Bethlehem the land of Juda art not the least among the princes of Juda: for out of thee shall come forth the captain that shall rule my people Israel. Then Herod privately calling the wise men learned diligently of them the time of the star which appeared to them; and sending them into Bethlehem, said: Go and diligently inquire after the child, and when you have found him; bring me word again, that I also may come and adore him. Who having heard the king, went their way; and behold the star which they had seen in the East, went before them, until it came and stood over where the child was. And seeing the star they rejoiced with exceeding great joy. And entering into the house, they found the child with Mary his mother, and falling down they adored him; and opening their treasures, they offered him gifts; gold, frankincense, and myrrh. And having received an answer in sleep that they should not return to Herod, they went back another way into their country."

This Gospel narrates, in the most precise manner, the seeking of the wise men for the Divine Infant. These three men were astronomers, and of royal extraction; their names were Caspar, Melchior, and Balthasar. They came from Arabia, and it is in reference to them, that the prophet David says: "The kings of Tharsis and of the islands shall offer presents the kings of the Arabians and of Saba shall bring gifts." (Ps. 71: 10.)

According to their statement, the birth of Christ had been revealed to them by the appearance of a star, although the expectation of the long-promised King of the Jews, could not have been unknown to the inhabitants of the East, from their knowledge of the famous prophecy of Balaam, to Balac the king of the Moabites, in which he foretells that "A star shall rise out of Jacob and a sceptre shall spring up from Israel: and shall strike the chiefs of Moab." (Numbers 24: 17.)

The star appearing to them must have differed from the other stars of the firmament; according to some doctors of the Church, it was in the form of a meteor; for as the Israelites were led out of Egypt by a pillar of light going before them, so were the wise men guided by the star to the birth-place of the Saviour.

After reaching the city of Jerusalem, they expected to find every one rejoicing over the event; but, on the contrary, they could find no one who was not astonished, when asked the question as to where was the "palace of the new-born King," and the news of their arrival soon reached the king. Herod was a very cruel ruler, and was afraid that the kingdom, which he had obtained by unfair means, might be lost to him, and he was moreover hated by his people; the tidings, therefore, of a king being born among them, filled him with trouble, as it did some other wicked persons in Jerusalem.

Herod was very cunning, and concealed his fear in the hope of learning the birth-place of the child, in order that he might put him to death. He therefore pretended to rejoice at the news, and declared his intention of paying homage to the infant as soon as it was found.

Oh ! the incomprehensible blindness of this great tyrant, who did not reflect that the power which in a miraculous manner announced the advent of the Saviour, was also able to confound the plots and plans of a wicked man.

As soon as the Magi had been informed by the Scribes where they should find the Messiah, they at once resumed their journey, the star again leading them, and disappearing only after they had reached Bethlehem, where to their great joy they found the Divine Child ; and, after adoring Him, offered, as was the custom of the East, the most precious gifts for His acceptance.

They found Him in a stable, attended by Mary and Joseph ; but, instead of being scandalized at the poverty of Him whom they sought, and of losing their faith in consequence, they were only the more confirmed. St. Bernard says : "The stable was not a stumbling block to them, they were not shocked at seeing Him wrapped in swaddling clothes, or in seeing Him nursed at His mother's bosom—but falling down, they adored Him as King and God, for He who had guided them thither, had filled their hearts with the light of His wisdom."

How significant, too, were the gifts they offered, gold, frankincense, and myrrh, indicating their knowledge of His being King, God, and Man ; for, by bringing gold, they showed their veneration for Him as King, by offering incense, their belief in Him as God ; and by the myrrh, a preparation for the death which they knew He would suffer as Man. ' Almighty God guided them in the selection of these gifts, by instructing them as to the Divine nature of Him to whom they should be offered.

After having adored the Saviour, the Magi returned to their country by a different way, having been warned by an angel not to place themselves in the power of Herod. According to tradition, they announced what they had seen to all whom they met, and instructed many in their belief.

After the ascension of Christ, and when the Apostle Thomas came into their country to teach the truths of the Gospel, they were baptized by him, and were of great assistance to him in his various undertakings. Their relics were first taken to Milan, but were afterwards carried by Rinaldos, Archbishop of Cologne, to his cathedral city—Cologne, on the Rhine—where they are still preserved in that world-renowned cathedral, a magnificent chapel containing them, and are yearly visited by thousands of the faithful.

The fathers of the Church instruct us as to the manner in which we can, in a spiritual sense, offer the same gifts as did the Magi. St. Gregory says : "We offer gold to the new-born Saviour, thereby confessing Him to be our King ; we offer frankincense, thereby confessing our faith in Him who appeared in the fulness of time, but who was God before time com-

menced; we offer myrrh, thus testifying our belief that He who could not suffer as God, would, after taking flesh, suffer death for the sins of the world. The gifts of the Magi may be again differently interpreted. By gold is meant wisdom, for, according to Solomon, "A desirable treasure is hidden in the mouth of a wise man;" by frankincense, the prayers of the faithful, for David says: "Let my prayers ascend as incense in thy sight;" and by myrrh, the mortification of the passions; those who successfully resist them are those of whom the church says: "My hands are dropping with myrrh,"—meaning that their memory shall be held in sweet odor.

The wonderful calling of the Magi to the true knowledge of Christ, is to us one of the most instructive events of sacred history. The conversion of the Magi was not only the type, but it was in fact the beginning of all conversions to the Christian faith. On this day, therefore, should we lift our hearts in joy and gratitude to God, who in His great mercy vouchsafed to rescue us from the darkness of infidelity, and who, from among so many millions, has brought us to the true knowledge and worship of His only-begotten Son. In relation to this fact, Pope Leo the Great thus addresses us: "Let us acknowledge, my beloved, in the Magi adoring Christ, messengers calling us to the true faith, and let us joyfully celebrate the birthday of our hope, for through them we came into the possession of our inheritance, through them the mysterious teachings of the Holy Scriptures were made clear to us, and the truths which the Jews rejected, bestowed upon us. Let us, therefore, honor this holy day upon which the Saviour gloriously manifested Himself, and let us adore Him as God in Heaven, whom the Magi adored as an infant in the crib; and as they offered to Him precious gifts, so let us bring to Him as acceptable presents, hearts purified from the least stain of sin."

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## FIRST SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY.

### INTROIT OF THE MASS.

"Upon a high throne I saw a man sitting, whom a multitude of angels adored, singing together, Behold him, the name of whose empire is eternity." (Is. 6). "Sing joyfully to God, all the earth: serve ye the Lord with gladness." (Ps. 99. 2). Glory be to the Father.

The above words of the prophet, referring to the Son of God, and to the eternal kingdom established by Him upon earth, form an appropriate subject



for our meditation during the octave of the Epiphany. We are called upon to serve the Lord with gladness, and to yield a willing obedience to His commands.

## PRAYER.

“Grant, we beseech thee, O Lord, in thy heavenly mercy, the prayers of Thy suppliant people, that they may both see what they ought to do, and may be enabled to do what they see. Through our Lord.”

## EPISTLE.—Romans 12 : 1-5.

“Brethren : I beseech you, by the mercy of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, pleasing unto God, your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world : but be reformed in the newness of your mind, that you may prove what is the good, and the acceptable, and the perfect will of God. For I say, through the grace that is given me, to all that are among you, not to be more wise than it behoveth to be wise, but to be wise unto sobriety, and according as God hath divided to every one the measure of faith. For as in one body we have many members, but all the members have not the same office : So we being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another.

The Catholic Church counsels us in these words of the Apostle, to lead holy lives, not forgetting that our bodies are temples of the Holy Ghost, and must in consequence be kept pure and undefiled. We should serve God faithfully in the condition of life in which we are placed, and according to the graces we receive from Him, taking care never to exalt ourselves at the expense of another, or to needlessly meddle in what does not concern us. For as in our body each member has its own particular functions to perform for the good of the whole, so it is with the great spiritual body of the Catholic Church. Each member of it has received special graces from God, which he must use for the general good of the Church; that is, he must love and respect his fellow-Christian, assisting him when applied to, for the welfare of the entire body depends upon the unanimity and harmony of its different members. In reference to this St. Ambrose says : “As one member is a part, belonging to the whole body, so none, who are united in the fold of Christ should say ‘You are not of my body,’ nor should the rich say to the poor—the noble to the ignoble—the strong to the weak—nor the learned to the ignorant, ‘I know you not, you are not related to me,’ for he who partakes of the body of Christ, becomes one with Christ.”

## GOSPEL.—Luke 2 : 42-52.

“When Jesus was twelve years old, they going up to Jerusalem according to



the custom of the feast, and having fulfilled the days, when they returned, the child Jesus remained in Jerusalem; and his parents knew it not. And thinking that he was in the company, they came a day's journey, and sought him among their kinsfolks and acquaintance. And not finding him, they returned into Jerusalem, seeking him. And it came to pass, that after three days they found him in the temple sitting in the midst of the doctors, hearing them and asking them questions. And all that heard him were astonished at his wisdom and his answers. And seeing him, they wondered. And his mother said to him: Son, why hast thou done so to us? behold thy father and I have sought thee sorrowing. And he said to them: How is it that you sought me? did you not know, that I must be about my Father's business? And they understood not the word, that he spoke unto them. And he went down with them, and came to Nazareth: and was subject to them. And his mother kept all these words in her heart. And Jesus advanced in wisdom and age, and grace with God and men."

According to the old law, all Jews of the male sex were obliged to appear in the temple of Jerusalem at the Feasts of Easter, Pentecost, and the Tabernacle—the celebration of which Feasts lasted eight days—and there bring offerings to the Lord. All women and children were excluded by the law; Mary, however, went every year with Joseph to Jerusalem, and when Jesus was twelve years old, they took Him with them to the Feasts, that He might honor His Heavenly Father. What an example for Christians to follow, seeing the Saviour obedient to the law in all things! Let us, then, resolve to observe every precept of our holy religion, especially the one enjoining upon us our duty to attend Mass on Sundays and Festivals.

Jesus remained longer in Jerusalem than did His parents; as a child he desired to show forth in the temple, the first rays of His divine wisdom, which should afterwards appear in its full splendor to all people.

The Divine Child remaining in Jerusalem after Mary and Joseph had left, caused the Blessed Mother to ask, "Son, why hast thou done so?" but He, in answer, reminded her of His higher destiny and of the obligation He was under, to serve His Heavenly Father. If, therefore, He caused sadness to the hearts of His parents, it was only done to show us the necessity of loving God more than anything upon earth. How many children, on the contrary, are a source of sorrow to their parents, not because they wish to do the will of God, but for the reason that they love neither God nor their parents. But the Gospel shows plainly to parents, that they must not expect to exercise over their children, rights belonging only to God; that is, in determining the vocation of their children. If their sons or daughters evince a desire to serve God as priests or as nuns, they should regard the will of God, in preference to their own; and should show a desire to advance the honor and glory of God, rather than

consider their own wishes, and the temporal advantages that might result from their children remaining at home.

The closing words of the Gospel in which it is said: "He was subject to them," "and advanced in wisdom and in age," show to us the hidden life of Christ from the twelfth to the thirtieth year of His age. What a perfect model of obedience, for children to see Christ, the God-Man, subject not only to the Holy Virgin, but to the carpenter Joseph, His reputed father. What a lesson of humility to us and how worthy of imitation.

"Who was subject? and to whom?" asks St. Bernard. "It is the Son of God, the creator of heaven and of earth. Blush, proud man, for although God has humbled Himself, you wish to exalt yourself."

The growing of the child Jesus in wisdom and in age, should teach us to advance daily in the knowledge and fear of God, until we have attained perfection.

## SECOND SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY.

### INTROIT OF THE MASS.

"Let all the earth adore thee, and sing to thee, O God; let it sing a psalm to thy name, thou the most high; all earth sing to the Lord; praise his name, bring him praise and honor." (Ps. 65.) Glory be to the Father.

The Church invites, in these sublime words of the royal prophet, all the inhabitants of the earth to praise and glorify God for the Incarnation of His only-begotten Son.

### PRAYER.

"Almighty, eternal God, who dispocest and governest all things in heaven and earth, hearken, we beseech thee, to the humble petitions, of thy people, and give us thy peace, through Jesus Christ. Amen."

### EPISTLE.—Rom. 12 : 6-16.

"Brethren having different gifts, according to the grace that is given us, whether prophecy, to be used according to the proportion of faith; or ministry, in ministering; or he that teacheth, in doctrine, he that exhorteth in exhorting, he that giveth with simplicity, he that ruleth with carefulness, he that sheweth mercy with cheerfulness. Let love be without dissimulation. Hating that which is evil, cleaving to that which is good. Loving one another with the

charity of brotherhood, in honor preventing one another. In carefulness not slothful. In spirit fervent. Serving the Lord. Rejoicing in hope. Patient in tribulation. Instant in prayer. Communicating to the necessities of the saints. Pursuing hospitality. Bless them that persecute you: bless, and curse not. Rejoice with them that rejoice, weep with them that weep. Being of one mind one towards another. Not minding high things, but consenting to the humble."

This Epistle is connected with that of the previous Sunday; in it we are again admonished to be true to our vocation, and to make ourselves worthy of the promises of Christ. The Apostle St. Paul presents, for our acceptance, beautiful rules of life in which we are distinctly told of our duties, not only to God, but to one another.

GOSPEL.—John 2: 1-11.

"At that time: There was a marriage in Cana of Galilee: and the mother of Jesus was there. And Jesus also was invited, and his disciples, to the marriage. And the wine failing, the mother of Jesus saith to him: They have no wine. And Jesus saith to her: Woman, what is to me and to thee? my hour is not yet come. His mother saith to the waiters: Whatsoever he shall say to you, do ye. Now there were set there six water-pots of stone, according to the manner of the purifying of the Jews, containing two or three measures apiece. Jesus saith to them: Fill the water-pots with water. And they filled them up to the brim. And Jesus saith to them: Draw out now and carry to the chief steward of the feast. And they carried it. And when the chief steward had tasted the water made wine, and knew not whence it was, but the waiters knew who had drawn the water; the chief steward calleth the bridegroom, and saith to him: Every man at first setteth forth good wine, and when men have well drunk, then that which is worse. But thou hast kept the good wine until now. This beginning of miracles did Jesus in Cana of Galilee, and he manifested his glory, and his disciples believed in him."

In this Gospel the Church reminds us of the third manifestation of the Lord, when by the performance of His first miracle He revealed His divine power, thereby strengthening the faith of the disciples who were with Him.

Our Saviour, by being present at the wedding feast, shows to us the dignity and sanctity of the marriage-state, and that it is not inconsistent with a Christian life to enjoy ourselves at weddings, if we do so in moderation. Writing upon the sacrament of marriage, St. Cyril says: "Jesus went to the wedding, to sanctify the means of our temporal birth—marriage; for as His mission was to renew the whole nature of man, He not only blessed those already born, but by working His first great miracle at a wedding-feast, honored the marriage-state, from which others should be born."



We learn also from this Gospel, that the first miracle of Christ was wrought at the intercession of the Blessed Virgin, His mother, who upon this occasion proved her love and compassion for those in want of assistance, and at the same time the power of her prayers with her Divine Son. Our Saviour, however, did not at once fulfill her wish, and His answer at first seems like a rebuke; but He desired to show her and all who were present, that a miracle was the work of God and not of man; that she understood His meaning, is clearly proved in the directions she gave to the waiters.

Although He had determined to work the miracle, the proper time had not yet come, for as St. Chrysostom says: "It was necessary that the want of wine should first be noticed by the guests, in order that they might be convinced that a miracle had been wrought."

St. Augustin compares this miracle of Christ to what yearly happens in our very midst, but which we regard as only in accordance with the laws of nature: "What our Lord did at the wedding feast of Cana with the six water-pots filled with water, He does every year in our vineyards; for as the water was changed into wine by the power of Christ, so the water falling from the clouds, causes the grapes to ripen, thereby repeating constantly the changing of water into wine."

The holy Fathers prove by this miracle of our Lord, the power possessed by Him to change the bread and wine into His own adorable body and blood which He did when He instituted the Holy Eucharist.

On this Sunday the Church also celebrates

## THE FEAST OF THE HOLY NAME OF JESUS.

### INTROIT OF THE MASS.

"In the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those that are in heaven, on earth, and under the earth. And that every tongue should confess that the Lord Jesus Christ is in the glory of God the Father." (Phil. 2: 10—11).  
 "O Lord our Lord, how admirable is thy name in all the earth!" (Ps. 8: 10.)

The Church very appropriately shows to us in these sublime words of the sacred Scriptures, the holiness of the "NAME OF JESUS," surpassing all other names, and calls upon all to venerate it.

### PRAYER.

"O God, who hast appointed Thine only-begotten Son the Saviour of mankind, and hast commanded that he should be called Jesus, mercifully grant, that we may enjoy in Heaven the blessed vision of Him, whose holy name we venerate upon earth. Through the same our Lord. Amen."



EPISTLE.—Acts 4: 8-12.

“In those days: Peter, filled with the Holy Ghost, said: Ye princes of the people and ancients, hear: If we this day are examined concerning the good deed done to the infirm man, by what means he hath been made whole. Be it known to you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified, whom God hath raised from the dead, even by him this man standeth here before you whole. This is the stone which was rejected by you the builders; which is become the head of the corner. Neither is there salvation in any other. For there is no other name under heaven given to men, whereby we must be saved.”

The Apostles Peter and John, a few days after the descent of the Holy Ghost, worked their first miracle by the power of the Holy Name of Jesus, upon a man lame from his birth, who sat at the entrance of the temple. Many who witnessed the miracle were converted to the Christian religion; the Apostles, however, were arrested by the magistrates, and brought before the council, where they were commanded to tell by what means they had effected the lame man's cure. Whereupon Peter, in answer, used the sublime words recorded in the Epistle, in which he declares the wonderful potency of the Holy Name of Jesus, in the belief of which salvation alone is to be found. We should also take example by what St. Peter did upon this occasion, and imitate his courage and openly confess our faith in Christ; and we should proclaim everywhere the power of the Lord, according to the admonition of our Saviour Himself: “Every one that shall confess me before men, I will also confess him before my Father who is in heaven.” (Matt. 10: 32.)

*Gospel.*—(As on the Feast of the Circumcision, or New Year's day. Page 113.)

St. Bernard thus writes upon the meaning, the power and the dignity of the most Holy Name of Jesus:

“Not without signification does the Holy Ghost compare the name of Jesus to oil, instructing the bridegroom to thus address his spouse: ‘Thy name is as oil poured out;’ for oil gives us *light*, serves as *food*, and as *medicine*. Behold, the same can be said of the Holy Name of Jesus, it illumines the darkness, whenever it is proclaimed; it strengthens us, whenever we meditate upon it, and like an ointment, it soothes our pains, whenever it is invoked. How did the light of the Gospel spread so rapidly over the earth, if not by preaching the name of Jesus? Has God not called us by the power of this Holy Name to this admirable light? St. Paul justly says to those who are enlightened, and see the light: ‘You were heretofore darkness, but now light in the Lord.’ The same Apostle was commanded to carry this name to the kings, and to the Jews and heathens, and he carried it as a burning torch, to enlighten the countries through which he journeyed, saying to all: ‘The night is passed, and the day

is at hand,' and he showed the light to all, by preaching Christ crucified. How brightly did this light shine, flashing in the eyes of his hearers, when proceeding from the mouth of St. Peter, strengthening the feet of a lame man, and enlightening all who were blind in their hearts; was it not like the spreading of fire, when he said: 'In the name of Jesus of Nazareth, arise and walk?' The Holy Name not only fills us with light, but it is as food for us; are we not excited to the performance of good works, by meditating upon it? No kind of food nourishes the soul, unless the oil of the Holy Name is poured upon it. In all that we do, let it be done, by first invoking the adorable Name; if we write, let His Name be the first word inscribed, or there will be no charm in what is written. The Name of Jesus is as honey in our mouth, music in our ears, and joy in our heart. It cures the diseases of the soul, calms the passions, makes us humble, heals our wounds, puts out the fire of concupiscence, and allays the thirst of avarice. In repeating the Holy Name, we bring before us a man full of meekness, humility, and mercy, but at the same time One who is God. He gives us, in His humanity, an example, and in His divinity He is as a shield to us.

Listen then, O my soul! in the Holy Name of Jesus you have a hidden treasure; let it be engraved upon your heart, and let all that you do have reference to Him alone. He invites you Himself, when He says: 'Let me be as a seal upon thy heart, and as a seal upon thy arm.'"

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### THIRD SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY.

#### INTROIT OF THE MASS.

"Adore God, all you his angels: Sion heard and was glad and the daughters of Juda rejoiced. The Lord hath reigned, let the earth rejoice, let many islands be glad." (Ps. 96). - Glory be to the Father.

The Church, still rejoicing over the sublime mysteries of divine love, which we celebrate at this holy season, invites even the angels to adore and praise Him, who, in so bountiful a manner, has shown His love and mercy for man.

#### PRAYER.

"Almighty and Eternal God, mercifully look upon our infirmities, and extend the right hand of Thy majesty for our protection. Through Christ."

## EPISTLE.—Romans 12: 16-21.

Brethren: "Be not wise in your own conceits. To no man rendering evil for evil. Providing good things not only in the sight of God, but also in the sight of all men. If it be possible, as much as is in you, having peace with all men. Not revenging yourselves, my dearly beloved; but give place unto wrath, for it is written: 'Revenge to me: I will repay, saith the Lord.' But 'if thy enemy be hungry, give him to eat; if he thirst, give him to drink. For, doing this, thou shalt heap coals of fire upon his head.' Be not overcome by evil, but overcome evil by good."

This lesson is connected with that of the previous Sunday, and is in fact a continuation of the admirable rules given to the Christians of Rome, by the Apostle St. Paul. We are especially called upon to practice the great command of loving our enemies, thereby proving ourselves to be faithful followers of Him who came into the world for all men, doing good to His persecutors, and even praying for them, when hanging upon the cross. Having Christ for an example, we should forgive those who have offended us, and be kind and gentle to them, leaving vengeance to God, who will repay every one according to their merits.

To "heap coals of fire upon his head" means, to move our enemies to sorrow for the injuries they have inflicted upon us, by our readiness to make peace and to forgive them for what they have done. By acting in such a manner we may perhaps excite in their hearts a desire to offer us the only revenge a Christian should accept, that is, a pledge to do better for the future. If, on the contrary, the proffered olive branch is refused, and they are not converted from enemies into friends by receiving good for their evil, then they are only the more guilty in the sight of God, and only "heap coals of fire upon their heads."

## GOSPEL.—Matt. 8: 1-13.

At that time: "When Jesus was come down from the mountain, great multitudes followed him: And behold a leper came and adored him, saying: Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean. And Jesus, stretching forth his hand, touched him, saying: I will, be thou made clean. And forthwith his leprosy was cleansed. And Jesus saith to him: See thou tell no man; but go, show thyself to the priest, and offer the gift which Moses commanded for a testimony unto them. And when he had entered into Capharnaum, there came to him a centurion, beseeching him, and saying: Lord, my servant lieth at home sick of the palsy, and is grievously tormented. And Jesus saith to him: I will come and heal him. And the centurion making answer, said: Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldst enter under my roof: but only say the word, and my servant shall be healed. For I also am a man subject to authority, having under me soldiers, and I say to this, Go, and he goeth, and to another, Come, and he



cometh, and to my servant, Do this, and he doeth it. And Jesus hearing this, marvelled; and said to them that followed him: Amen I say to you, I have not found so great faith in Israel. And I say to you that many shall come from the east and the west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven: But the children of the kingdom shall be cast out into the exterior darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. And Jesus said to the centurion; Go, and as thou hast believed, so be it done to thee. And the servant was healed at the same hour."

The Gospel of to-day mentions two miracles worked by the Son of God, manifesting in them His omnipotence, wisdom and benignity.

After delivering His sermon on the Mount, Christ descended from the mountain, and immediately gave a proof of His divinity, by healing the sick. The first one who appeared to Him for help was a leper, who evinced His great faith in the power of the Saviour, by adoring Him, and although praying that he might be cured, leaving it to God to do with him as seemed best. Our Lord rewarded the poor man, by cleansing him at once from his leprosy, telling him at the same time to speak of it to no one, for what cared He for the praises of the world.

According to the interpretation of the holy Fathers, the leper is the type of fallen man, who was cleansed from sin by the Saviour. Every sinner is, figuratively speaking, a leper, for sin is like a horrid leprosy to the soul. In the same manner as our Lord cleansed the leper, sending him afterwards to the priest to be pronounced clean, and fit to be again received among men, so He does with the sinner, in the sacrament of penance, for in the priest of the Catholic Church, the sinner finds one to whom the power of forgiving sins has been given, and one who, by pronouncing the words of absolution, receives him again into the communion of the children of God.

The second one cured by our Saviour was the servant of a centurion of Capharnaum. This centurion, although a Pagan, exhibited a degree of faith worthy of Christian imitation. He went himself to Christ, asking Him to heal his sick servant. What an example to masters who treat their servants as though they were not human beings, despising them, and neglecting them if taken sick while in their service.

When our Saviour declared Himself ready to go with him to see the servant, the centurion with the greatest faith and humility uttered the words: "Lord! I am not worthy that thou shouldst enter under my roof, say but the word and my servant will be healed." Upon hearing him say this, our Saviour was astonished, telling His disciples and followers that He had not found such faith in all Israel, for he proved his faith, by believing that with a single word from the lips of Christ, the sick person would be cured, and his humility, by protesting his unworthiness to receive Him under his roof. Our Lord bestowed

great praise upon the good centurion, censuring the Jews for their unbelief, when they had so many evidences of His divinity before their very eyes. The Catholic Church has commanded the words spoken by the centurion, to be used before administering or receiving the Holy Communion, because in these simple words is contained a profession of our faith in the Most Blessed Sacrament, and of our unworthiness to receive the divine Guest.

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#### FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY.

The *Introit of the Mass* is the same as on the last Sunday.

##### PRAYER.

“O God, who knowest that amidst so many dangers we cannot subsist, by reason of our frailty, grant us safety of mind and body, that we may surmount those things by Thy grace, which we suffer for our sins. Through our Lord.”

##### EPISTLE.—Romans 13: 8-10.

Brethren: “Owe no man any thing, but to love one another. For he that loveth his neighbor hath fulfilled the law. For Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Thou shalt not covet: and if there be any other commandment, it is comprised in this word: Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. The love of our neighbor worketh no evil. Love therefore is the fulfilling of the law.”

The Church instructs us again by the words of St. Peter, how we, as followers of Christ, should live, and our attention is directed in a special manner to the one great command of loving our neighbor; for in this commandment is comprised the essence of the whole ten; he, who loves God loves his neighbor, and would consequently do nothing to injure or annoy him, for if he does so intentionally, he proves thereby, that no true love for God exists in his heart.

##### GOSPEL.—Matt. 8: 23-27.

At that time: “When Jesus entered into the boat, his disciples followed him: and behold a great tempest arose in the sea, so that the boat was covered with waves, but he was asleep. And his disciples came to him, and awaked him, saying: Lord, save us, we perish. And Jesus saith to them: Why are you fearful, O ye of little faith? Then rising up he commanded the winds, and the sea, and there came a great calm. But the men wondered, saying: What manner of man is this, for the winds and the sea obey him?”

In this Gospel, as in that of last Sunday, is revealed the omnipotence of our Lord, showing that by the utterance of a few words He possessed the power to still the raging storm, thus filling His disciples with astonishment; but He at the same time reproved them for their want of faith. The boat, in which our Saviour crossed the sea with the disciples, and which He saved from the fury of the waves, is according to the interpretations of the Holy Fathers, a figure of the Church, safely riding over the angry and tempestuous waters that seek in vain to overwhelm her; but with Christ as her invisible head, she triumphs over everything that conspires against her. She is on this account often called the "BARK OF PETER." The danger from which Christ rescued His disciples is a figure of the dangers and temptations with which the world assails us, and from which Christ alone can rescue us, which He will surely do, if we only have faith in Him.

St. Augustine says, "We are in the world, as if on the sea; for we are visited by many adverse winds, and sometimes by great storms; we are in danger often of sinking beneath the waves of temptation; but this is caused by Jesus sleeping within us, that is, by our want of faith; awaken Him, put your whole trust in Him, and the tempest will be quelled."

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### FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY.

The *Introit* is the same as on the third Sunday after Epiphany.

#### PRAYER.

"Preserve, we beseech thee O Lord, Thy family by continued mercy, that, relying solely on the hope of heavenly grace, it may be always defended by Thy protection. Through Christ our Lord. Amen."

EPISTLE.—Col. 3: 12-17.

Brethren: "Put ye on, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, the bowels of mercy, benignity, humility, modesty, patience: Bearing with one another and forgiving one another, if any have a complaint against another: even as the Lord hath forgiven you, so do you also. But above all these things have charity, which is the bond of perfection: And let the peace of Christ rejoice in your hearts, wherein also you are called in one body; and be ye thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you abundantly, in all wisdom: teaching and admonishing one another in psalms, hymns, and spiritual canticles, singing in grace in your hearts to God. All whatsoever you do in word or in work, all things do ye in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, giving thanks to God and the Father by Jesus Christ our Lord."



In this lesson the Church exhorts us, as the chosen children of God, as those sanctified in holy baptism, and as members of His sacred body, to put into practice the Christian virtues of mercy, humility, and forgiveness. We are at the same time admonished to praise and glorify God with grateful hearts, and to do nothing without first invoking His blessing.

GOSPEL.—Matt. 13: 24-30.

At that time: "Jesus spoke this parable to the multitude: "The kingdom of heaven is likened to a man that sowed good seed in his field. But while men were asleep, his enemy came and oversowed cockle among the wheat, and went his way. And when the blade was sprung up, and had brought forth fruit, then appeared also the cockle. And the servants of the good man of the house coming said to him: Sir, didst thou not sow good seed in thy field? whence then hath it cockle? And he said to them: An enemy hath done this. And the servants said to him: Wilt thou that we go and gather it up? And he said: No, lest perhaps gathering up the cockle, you root up the wheat also together with it. Suffer both to grow until the harvest, and in the time of the harvest I will say to the reapers: Gather up first the cockle, and bind it into bundles to burn; but the wheat gather ye into my barn."

It was customary in the East to speak in parables drawn from nature, when a great truth was to be expounded. We find them often used in the old law, but more frequently by our Saviour, when teaching His heavenly doctrine to the people, in order to bring it within their comprehension.

Pope Gregory the Great says, "The kingdom of heaven is compared with terrestrial things, so that our thoughts may be directed from things known to things unknown; from the contemplation of things visible to things invisible; and if we love what we know upon earth, with how much more zeal should we strive to attain the unspeakable joys of heaven."

Our Saviour sometimes spoke in parables which His hearers found it difficult to understand, but they contained truths which He did not wish made clear before the time, as His enemies were always on the watch for something to confound Him, if possible, in the estimation of the people, so that it was an act of prudence on the part of the Saviour, as well as of compassion toward us, that influenced Him to speak so often in parables; for He knew that His hour had not yet come.

In regard to the signification of certain sentences in this day's Gospel, it is necessary to remark that by the words "kingdom of heaven" in this as in other parts of the sacred Scriptures, is not meant the real kingdom of heaven, that is, the place of eternal happiness, where we shall see and possess God forever, and which is the reward promised to the just; but it is to be understood as meaning the kingdom of God upon earth, that is the *Church* founded by Christ, and in-

stituted by Him in order that we may be prepared for the joys of the world to come. Before the coming of the Lord the kingdom of God, that is the belief in Him, existed among the Jews, and the true knowledge and worship of Him was preserved by them.

Our Saviour explains the meaning of the parables used by Him when questioned by His disciples in the following words: "He that soweth the good seed, is the son of man. And the field is the world. And the good seed are the children of the kingdom. And the cockle are the children of the wicked one. And the enemy that sowed them is the devil. But the harvest is the end of the world, and the reapers are the Angels. Even as the cockle therefore is gathered up, and burnt with fire; so shall it be at the end of the world. The son of man shall send his Angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all scandals, and them that work iniquity. And shall cast them into the furnace of fire: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." (Matt. 13: 37-42.) The parable not only speaks of the devil as the enemy of both God and man, but it teaches us that the day of reckoning will surely come for the wicked, although the mercy of God is incomprehensible in giving them time, which is often used only for the purpose of again offending Him, instead of doing penance for their sins; nevertheless it is His holy will, that the good and the bad shall dwell together upon earth. How often do we see in one family some who spend their lives in the service of God, while others of the same family perhaps will scoff at and revile religion; we can therefore the more easily comprehend the loving kindness of God; for if He were to punish the wicked as they deserve, the innocent would suffer in a measure.

And again, how many opportunities do not the wicked give to the good, for the exercise of the Christian virtues of patience, meekness, and forgiveness! God suffers the wicked to live for some wise purpose; but His justice will reach them if in place of repentance they persevere in their sins, until death leaves it no longer in their power either to offend or serve God. Let it be a warning to us, that if we have become like the cockle, fit only to be burned, we should before the reaper comes, root out from our hearts every thing that has grown there contrary to the command of the sower, who is God.

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## SIXTH SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY.

The *Introit* is the same as on the third Sunday after Epiphany.

### PRAYER.

"Grant, we beseech thee, Almighty God, that, ever fixing our thoughts on reasonable things, we may perform, both in words and in works, the things that are pleasing to Thee. Through Christ. Amen.

## EPISTLE.—Thess. 1 : 2-10.

Brethren : “We give thanks to God always for you all ; making a remembrance of you in our prayers without ceasing, Being mindful of the work of your faith, and labor, and charity, and of the enduring of the hope of our Lord Jesus Christ before God and our Father ; Knowing, brethren beloved of God, your election : For our gospel hath not been unto you in word only, but in power also, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much fulness, as you know what manner of men we have been among you for your sakes. And you became followers of us, and of the Lord : receiving the word in much tribulation, with joy of the Holy Ghost : So that you were made a pattern to all that believe in Macedonia and in Achaia. For from you was spread abroad the word of the Lord, not only in Macedonia and in Achaia, but also in every place, your faith which is towards God, is gone forth, so that we need not to speak any thing. For they themselves relate of us, what manner of entering in we had unto you ; and how you turned to God from idols, to serve the living and true God. And to wait for his Son from heaven (whom he raised up from the dead), Jesus who hath delivered us from the wrath to come.”

St. Paul, in the lesson of to-day, praises the Christians of Thessalonica, the capital of Macedonia, for their lively faith, their patience, and their charity, and tells them that, by persevering in the practice of these excellent virtues, they have made themselves worthy of being numbered among the elect, and may be regarded as models for Christian imitation.

The Church, therefore, proposes the Thessalonians to us as examples, so that by practising all the Christian virtues, we may have the happiness of being admitted into the kingdom of God.

## GOSPEL.—Matt. 13 : 31-35.

At that time : Jesus spoke to the multitudes this parable : “The kingdom of heaven is like to a grain of mustard-seed, which a man took and sowed in his field. Which is the least indeed of all seeds : but when it is grown up, it is greater than all herbs, and becometh a tree, so that the birds of the air come, and dwell in the branches thereof. Another parable he spoke to them : The kingdom of heaven is like to leaven, which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal, until the whole was leavened. All these things Jesus spoke in parables to the multitudes : and without parables he did not speak to them. That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying : I will open my mouth in parables, I will utter things hidden from the foundation of the world.”

This Gospel contains two parables, in which our Saviour speaks to the Jews concerning the kingdom of heaven, which He came to restore. In the parable of the mustard-seed we are reminded of the miraculous spreading of the Church



over the whole earth. In the beginning small and almost invisible like the grain of mustard-seed, she has grown into gigantic proportions, under the fostering care of her divine founder, Jesus Christ. She has resisted successfully every thing opposed to her, she has outlived the most bloody persecutions, and her present vigor and strength is sufficient to establish her divine origin. She is therefore compared to a large tree, whose branches extend over the whole world, affording shelter to all who place themselves under her protection, just as a tree gives shade and rest to the birds of the air.

This parable can also be applied to the doctrines of Christ. St. Augustin says: "We can not judge of the qualities of the mustard-seed from its outward appearance, for to the eye it is insignificant, and if put upon the tongue, tasteless, but when ground, it diffuses a powerful odor, and is very pungent to the taste, and we are surprised that such strength is contained in so small a particle. It is therefore used in seasoning food, as it creates a pleasant warmth within the body. It is also of great value as a medicine, violent pains often being relieved by its application. So it is with the Church of Christ; in her infancy she seemed weak and helpless, but after centuries have passed away, we see her increasing in beauty and vigor; every persecution that she suffers draws forth the sweet odor of her sanctity. The fire of divine faith glows within the hearts of her children, and it never dies, but receives daily fresh proofs of the loving kindness and mercy of Almighty God."

By the parable of the "leaven" our Saviour desired to show the power and efficacy of His divine teachings, which, like the leaven hidden in the meal, penetrate into the very heart of man, changing it entirely. How this parable has been verified, we can see in the lives of the early Christians, handed down to us in the Acts of the Apostles, and in the writings of the holy Fathers: for the very men, who as Jews and Pagans led wicked and immoral lives, were by their conversion to Christianity, so changed that they no longer appeared as the same men. They commenced at once the practice of virtues in direct opposition to their former vices; they led supernatural lives, and confessed their faith not only by their amended lives, but by the firmness with which they suffered persecution. It should not therefore surprise us that Tertullian, one of the first Fathers of the Church, says: "There are no drunkards, no misers, no robbers, no adulterers, in other words, none who offend God among us."

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# LEGENDS.

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## ST. ODILO.

(January 1.)

"Charity."

ST. ODILO was an Abbot, distinguished for the kindness and charity of his disposition; one who knew him describes him in the following words:—

"His face always appeared sweet and amiable to the good, but to the proud and wicked it assumed an expression that terrified them. He was thin and pale, and wore long gray hair, his eyes were clear and beautiful, and beamed with a heavenly light, his voice and manner of speech were pleasing to the ear, striking upon the heart like the mellow tones of a church bell. He lived upon earth, but his spirit dwelt in heaven, for as it is said in the canticles 'I sleep, but my heart watcheth,' so it was with Odilo; when he fell asleep, his lips still continued to sound the praises of God; and when he awoke, as if he had been perfectly conscious in the interval, he finished the psalm he had commenced before retiring to rest.

Popes, Bishops, kings, and emperors, felt the greatest love and veneration for him; the pious Empress Adelaide when he came to visit her, knelt humbly at his feet, and kissed the hem of his garment, weeping with joy at the honor he had conferred upon her in coming to see her.

To a soul not filled with the fear and love of God, to have been thus treated might have given birth to feelings of pride and triumph; but we know that a few drops of water extinguish the light of a small lamp, while, on the contrary, the more water you throw into a furnace, the brighter grows the flame; so it was with Odilo, the greater the honors heaped upon him, the more humble did

he become in his intercourse with his fellow-men, and the more fervent in his piety.

He was a staff for the blind, food for the hungry, hope for those in sorrow, and a consolation to the afflicted; his only happiness was in doing good. Many reproached him for his indiscriminate charity, but he only answered, "I would rather be judged for having shown too much mercy, than for a want of it."

That this trait in his character was pleasing in the sight of God, can be easily shown; for when sometimes he had given all that he possessed to the poor, Almighty God so moved the hearts of his friends, that very soon all his wants were supplied.

There was once a great famine in the land, and Odilo, while upon a journey, found two children starved to death, lying in the road; he dismounted, took off his cloak, wrapped it about them, and had them properly interred. St. Martin gave the half of his cloak to a beggar, but Odilo gave the whole of his to bury the dead. The famine continued for several years, and the distress became very great; when he had given away all that he had, Odilo resolved to dispose of the silver vessels of the church, and of a golden crown, presented to him by Henry, Emperor of Germany; these he sold for the benefit of the poor, for he said, "that if Christ gave His own precious body and blood for us, so should we give all that we have to the poor." He solicited alms in their behalf from his wealthy friends, thereby saving thousands from starvation, and causing many to reap with him the fruit of a charitable work. He was like a tender father to all who approached him in their necessity, and after a life spent in doing good, died in the grace of God about eight hundred years ago.

Let us therefore, dear reader, learn from the life of St. Odilo to be kind and merciful to all. Remember that 'charity covereth a multitude of sins; if you show mercy, God will show it to you, if you give to Him in the persons of the poor, He will repay you by bestowing upon you heaven as your reward, and in order to encourage ourselves in the practice of charity, let us meditate upon the words spoken by an angel to Cornelius: "Thy alms are held in remembrance in the sight of God."

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## ST. MAXIMUS.

(January 2.)

"Celibacy"

MAXIMUS was the only son of wealthy parents; a holy Bishop superintended his education, and he became so distinguished for his piety and learning, that he was elected to fill an office of high honor, although very young at the time.



A nobleman by the name of Beraldus, having convinced himself that Maximus would make an excellent husband for his daughter Hebelde, offered to give her a large dower if Maximus would take her as his wife. He accordingly made the necessary settlements with the father of the young man; but Maximus, who had in his youth made the vow of chastity, hearing of their plans, determined to leave his home, and sought refuge with his early preceptor, the Bishop.

Fearing, however, that he might be a source of trouble to the Bishop, and dreading the anger of his father, he found means to leave his home, and having reached a wilderness in which dwelt several holy hermits, he joined them, and for a long time lived secluded from the world, serving God in silence and solitude.

But how difficult is it to escape the snares of the devil! In a dream the Evil One appeared to the father of Maximus, and said to him: "Listen to what I will tell thee; thy son dwells in a wilderness; arise, and I will lead thee to him." In the morning, therefore, the father, accompanied by a servant, sought for his son in the wilderness, and having found him, placed chains upon his hands and brought him into the city and there cast him into prison, in order to force him into compliance with his wishes.

Beraldus rejoiced that he whom he desired as a son had been found, and to honor the event, prepared a magnificent banquet. Maximus was brought from his cell, and told by his father to take from the hand of Beraldus the ring of betrothal, and place it upon the finger of Hebelde.

He at first positively refused to obey him, but when his father struck him with his cane he took the ring, and said: "I promise to become thy husband." The day was appointed for the marriage; the happy Beraldus had already invited his friends and neighbors, when suddenly Maximus disappeared.

Feeling very unhappy from having promised to do that which was directly opposed to the vow he had made to serve God in the state of celibacy, Maximus was one day walking through the streets of the city, full of despondency, when he met a pilgrim, to whom he related his troubles. The holy man advised him to go with him upon his pilgrimage, and without a moment's hesitation Maximus followed his counsel, and left a home of luxury, a rich and beautiful bride, and all that under other circumstances would have made life happy, in order to devote himself, body and soul, to the service of God.

It will not be necessary for us to follow Maximus in his wanderings as a pilgrim; it is sufficient for us to know that he at last found shelter in a convent, where he distinguished himself by his piety and humility.

But heretofore his trials had been those of the soul; he was now called upon to suffer in the body. A wicked man one day met him and without a moment's warning inflicted upon him a deadly wound, by piercing him through with his sword.

Maximus was carried at once to his cell, but in the midst of his agony he heard a voice calling his name; he in reply said: "Who is it that calls me?" when the voice answered: "I am one of the messengers of heaven; fear not, to morrow thou shalt see things never dreamed of by thee. St. Michael with a choir of angels will appear to thee, singing hymns of joy, and he will guide thee into Paradise; for in all thy works the love of God has filled thy soul. Thou art worthy to be received into the company of saints and martyrs, for thou didst shed thy blood for the sake of Christ, and hast striven unceasingly after the kingdom of heaven."

The next day, when all the inmates of the convent had assembled in his cell, he asked for a cup of wine, tasted it, and called upon the brothers to do the same, as a pledge of mutual love; he then begged all to forgive him if he had offended them in any way, kissed each one and bade them farewell, then making the sign of the cross, and saying that he heard the heavenly music, he died peacefully.

The happiness experienced by Maximus in his life and death, proves to us how fully God compensates those who dedicate their lives to Him. The love of God is the treasure hidden in the field, it is the precious jewel spoken of in the Gospel. You can not, therefore, seek or pray for any thing more valuable, than to ask for the love of God within your hearts.

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## ST. GENEVIEVE.

(January 3.)

"Results of prayer."

ST. GENEVIEVE is the patroness of the city of Paris, where she spent her life in doing good. She was born about thirteen hundred years ago in a small village in the kingdom of France, and after her death a church was built over her remains and dedicated to her, which still exists in one of the oldest parts of the city.

A saintly Bishop on his way to England, perceived among the crowd which had come to receive his blessing, a beautiful little girl about seven years old. He called the child to him, and inspired by the Holy Ghost, told her parents that she would prove to be their pride and comfort, and predicted that she would grow daily in grace; that through the example of her holy life many who had gone astray would return to the paths of virtue. He then laid his hands upon the child's head and counseled her to devote herself to the service of God—full of joy, Genevieve promised to obey him. The Bishop then gave her a small medal of the blessed Virgin, saying to her: "Take this as a souvenir from me; never adorn thyself with ornaments of gold or silver, but seek only to acquire the precious jewels of humility, patience, and chastity."

Her mother was once preparing to attend Mass, when Genevieve asked permission to go with her, but the mother angrily refused, and the child burst into tears, saying: "I have promised the Bishop to lead a life of piety, let me therefore go with thee to the temple of God;" but the mother only became the more, enraged and violently struck her weeping daughter; she had hardly done so when the Heavenly Father, whom her child desired to worship, punished her with blindness. Two years passed away, when one day meditating upon the cause of her affliction, she suddenly remembered the words spoken by the holy Bishop, and calling Genevieve to her, asked her to bring some fresh water. The daughter's grief had been very great at the loss of her mother's eyesight, she wept continually, blaming herself as the cause of her mother's blindness, and in bringing the water from the fountain, her tears mingled plentifully with it. When she entered the room in which her mother sat, the blind woman raised her hands to heaven, and said: "Genevieve, make the sign of the cross over the water." She did so, and her mother having bathed her eyes three times with the water, in honor of the Holy Trinity, at once received her sight.

When Genevieve was fifteen, she entered a convent in order to attain greater perfection; but of the many important events in her life we will mention but two, as they are sufficient to prove the power of her prayers at the throne of God, and of the many blessings she obtained from Him not only for herself but for others.

Attila, king of the Huns, who were at that time the most barbarous people on earth, invaded France, and laid waste everything before him. He burned cities and villages, and put to death all the inhabitants wherever he could find them. The citizens of Paris, hearing that he was marching upon their city, were seized with a panic, and were all preparing to leave their homes, when Genevieve suddenly appeared in their midst, and called upon the women to unite with her in supplicating God to save their city from destruction. She entreated the men to remain where they were, predicting that the part of the country in which they intended to seek safety would be overrun by the savages, but that Paris would be preserved. Her words were verified, for owing to the fervor of her prayers, and those of the inhabitants animated by her example, the beautiful city was saved; Attila and his barbarians going off in another direction.

Upon another occasion several persons were condemned to death in Paris. King Hilderic, although not a Christian, had the greatest veneration for the pious and holy Genevieve and she had been successful in obtaining his pardon at different times for poor men who had been sentenced to die. Fearing that she might intercede in favor of those now to be executed, the king ordered the doors of his palace to be barred, so that Genevieve could not enter, if she came with any petition.

As the king anticipated, Genevieve was on her way to ask for mercy in



their behalf, and when she presented herself before the entrance of the palace the doors opened, to the astonishment of the guards; and the king, seeing that it was useless to resist the evidence of such a miracle, granted the pardon she asked for.

In every city and village we can always find persons who spend their lives in doing charitable works. They seldom marry, sometimes enter a convent, or else live quietly and peacefully at home, having but little intercourse with the world, but so much the more with God; they dress plainly, spending only what is absolutely necessary upon themselves, in order that they may give so much the more to the poor; they are never seen in places of public resort, but frequently in the church of God, and in the miserable dwellings of poverty and sickness. And yet how often are such pious men and women abused and slandered by the world, and called in derision devotees, useless creatures, idlers, hypocrites, etc., etc.

The few incidents in the life of St. Genevieve, however, illustrate beautifully the words of St. Paul: "We labor and are reviled, because we hope in the living God."

By giving good advice, and by praying constantly for all who desired her intercession, Genevieve served God more acceptably, perhaps, than if she had labored with her hands and given her bodily strength to some worldly occupation.

Although the larger portion of some gardens are devoted to the culture of vegetables and fruit-trees, the gardener nevertheless sets apart a corner in which he plants the lily, the rose, the violet, and other beautiful flowers, and if not as useful in satisfying the physical wants of man in their way they bear equal testimony to the power and goodness of God. So it is with men, dwelling in the great garden of the world; some are called upon to work out their salvation with fear and trembling in the world, while others, like tender plants, seek shelter in the sanctuary of God; but by their prayers and fastings draw down not only upon themselves, but also upon others, the mercy and compassion of the great Lord and King of all.

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## ST. ANGELA.

(January 4.)

"Sincere Conversion"

IF I should ask you, dear reader, which you preferred to hear, things relating to the worldly life of Angela, or the means by which she attained religious perfection, I have no doubt but that you would choose the latter—with



your permission then, I will present for your acceptance some of the rules followed by the Saint in her efforts to obtain the grace of sincere conversion.

She says, "In order to be converted I meditated upon the enormity of my sins, and the thought filled me with fear and sorrow.

"I became so ashamed of my transgressions, that in my folly I concealed some of them from my confessor and consequently received the sacraments unworthily. But my conscience gave me no rest, and praying for divine assistance, I went to a priest to whom I confessed everything and who absolved me, nevertheless my soul experienced no feeling of relief or joy, but was oppressed with bitterness and pain.

"I scrupulously performed the penance imposed upon me by the priest, but my sadness remained, there was no consolation for me.

"But in my dejection I recognized the hand of God in having led me to make a true and perfect confession of my sins, thereby saving me from eternal damnation. My gratitude therefore became very great, and I resolved to do penance for my whole life.

"I discovered in myself nothing but what was hateful in the sight of God, and it made me most wretched.

"I felt more and more the grievousness of my sins, they weighed heavily upon my soul; especially when I remembered how often I had sinned against the mercy of God. I implored the Blessed Virgin and all the Saints to intercede for me, and to obtain for me God's grace, so that an earnest desire to save my soul might be awakened within me.

"I received the extraordinary privilege of seeing, in a vision, our dear Lord hanging upon the cross, suffering for the sins of the world; even this did not satisfy me, for my soul still felt dry and barren, but I saw clearly how I had crucified my Saviour in having by my sins daily re-opened His wounds.

"My heart was at last filled with such an ardent love and desire to serve God, that I resolved to renounce my earthly possessions, I made the vow of chastity, and solemnly promised never again to offend Him.

"The way of the cross was shown to me as the road in which I should walk. I was told to forgive my enemies, and to give my whole heart to God, for by the thorny path of affliction alone should I be enabled to reach heaven. I therefore commenced to dress very plainly, and eat but sparingly, it was at first very difficult, for I had not yet the true love of God within me.

"I continued to ask of our dear Lord what I should do to please Him, and sometimes He would appear to me fastened upon the cross, telling me to look at His wounds, showing me all that He had suffered for my sake, and once He said to me: 'If you desire to serve me, strive to do my will in all things.'

"When I had very nearly settled my worldly affairs, the thought struck me, that after I had given away to the poor all I had, perhaps I myself might die of hunger, or else be forced to beg.

"My friends endeavored at this very time to dissuade me from carrying out my resolution, but seeing the discord raging within my soul, our dear Lord had pity on me, and gave me the courage to finally accomplish the desire of my heart. In my thankfulness, I offered to suffer all that I had previously dreaded, if it would only draw me nearer to God.

"I implored the Blessed Virgin and St. John the Evangelist, by the pains they had both experienced while standing beneath the cross, to obtain for me the grace of being always mindful of the passion of Christ.

"This was my constant prayer, and at last I had a vision, in which our divine Saviour appeared to me, pointing to His sacred heart and saying: 'Here you will find nothing but truth.' Again He appeared to me, and I saw more vividly than before, the precious blood flowing from His wounds. He sprinkled me with it, and I was purified. This was a source of great comfort to me although I felt sad when I saw how much He had suffered for me, and that His wounds were still opened whenever I offended Him; and in the excess of my love, I begged Him to let me shed my blood for Him, as he had done for me.

"I besought the holy Mother of God and St. John, to procure for me the extraordinary grace of feeling in my soul the pains He had suffered, or those they themselves had experienced while watching the last moments of their expiring Redeemer, and by their powerful intercession this great favor also was obtained for me.

"Once, on my way to Mass, I begged Almighty God to give me the grace to fulfill in my life the divine precepts laid down in the Lord's prayer, and from that moment it became very easy for me to follow the rules He has given us in that beautiful petition.

"Through the prayers of the Blessed Virgin, I received the gift of a lively faith; hitherto my faith had been without good works, but now I felt within me a certainty of being saved by the sufferings of Christ."

Before proceeding further in our extracts from the life of St. Angela, it is necessary for us to remark, that she was distinguished for the purity of her life, although she accuses herself of sinning grievously, in the revelations she has left us; but from them we learn how difficult it is to be sincerely converted to God, and how earnest must be the desire to accomplish the work of our salvation. It is impossible to stop half-way in the path of perfection, an unwilling heart is not acceptable to God, for has He not said: "Give me thy whole heart?"

We should therefore learn from the experience of St. Angela, to make choice of a prudent confessor, to meditate upon the sufferings of Christ, and to receive the sacraments worthily. Let our whole trust be in God, seek only His compassion, and He will hide your sins in His sacred wounds, and purify you from them in His precious blood.

St. Angela says in conclusion: "I feel so happy now in possessing God,  
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that I have lost all desire for food of any kind. He has said to me: "Thou art my daughter and my temple, I love thee infinitely more than thou dost me. My love is boundless for the soul that loves me, and I will grant all that is asked of me, for I am more willing to give than thou art to receive."

In the above extracts, we see how beautiful the inner life of the soul can be made, if filled with the love of God, and with a sincere desire to serve Him. But on the contrary, look at the soul that exhausts its energies in the service of the world, what sorrow and restlessness possess it. Make your choice at once then, be sincerely converted to God, and the "peace of God that surpasseth all things," will fill your heart and soul.

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### ST. EDWARD.

(January 5.)

"Meekness."

MEEKNESS is one of the loveliest of the Christian virtues, whether blossoming like the lily of the valley in the hearts of the poor, or guarded as a precious jewel in the diadem of the monarch. How beautiful is it then, to see it growing brighter and brighter, and reflecting its lustre upon every action of the life of one called by God to rule over a great empire.

In his youth Prince Edward suffered much from the wicked persecutions of his enemies, and was obliged to leave England in order to save his life; but God came to his assistance, and he was soon recalled to take possession of his throne.

He brought blessings with him, for the chronicles of that time say: "Since he came the earth has become more fruitful, the air fresher, and the sea calmer."

Kings and princes sought his friendship, but he was contented to live plainly at home, watching like a kind father over the interests of his people. He gave liberally to the poor, and never spoke of what he had done, remembering the words of the Saviour: "Let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth."

He once manifested in a particular manner his humility and charity. A poor cripple, who was obliged to crawl upon his hands and knees, one day met the chancellor of the King and begged him to have pity on him, when the chancellor said: "What can I do for you," the beggar answered: "I have often crept upon my hands and knees into the church, hoping to be cured, but I am still helpless. In a vision I saw one who seemed to be a king, and I was told that if he would carry me before the altar, I should become strong and well again."



The chancellor went home and repeated what he had heard to the king, who thanked God for making him an instrument of mercy to the poor.

He sought out the cripple, took him in his arms, and carried him into the church. On his way the people laughed and mocked at him, telling him that the beggar had made a fool of him, but when the king had reached the church, the poor man felt his strength returning, and when the king had placed him before the altar, he stood up in the midst of the congregation, perfectly cured.

Edward would never give way to anger. Once, when he had been insulted by a certain man, he only said: "Your punishment I will leave to God." He was by nature more inclined to give than to receive, and more ready to forgive than to punish.

He was not only kind to the poorest man, looking upon him as his brother in the Lord, but he had at heart the welfare of his whole kingdom. An English historian says of him: "His desire was to promote peace within his dominions, to further the cause of religion, and to diminish within the hearts of his people the power of Satan."

Edward was exceedingly beloved by his subjects, and the kingdom over which he ruled in mercy and loving kindness was plunged into grief at his death, and when his successor oppressed the people they would sigh after the happiness they had enjoyed in the reign of the good and pious Edward.

The king had a special devotion to St. John the Evangelist, the Disciple of Love; if anything was asked of him in the name of St. John, he always granted it. A stranger once came to him and asked alms of him, in the name of the Blessed Disciple; the king having no money about him, took from his finger a valuable ring and gave it to him. Some time after this, two Englishmen determined to make a pilgrimage to the Holy Sepulchre; while on their journey they lost their way, and night coming on, they knew not what to do, when suddenly a man of venerable appearance stood before them, and offered to conduct them to a place of shelter and rest. The next day when they were preparing to resume their journey their host said to them: "You will arrive safely at your place of destination, God will be with you, and I will be your guide, for I am St. John the Evangelist. I am the pilgrim who once asked alms of your king, and to whom he gave this ring; take it back to him, and tell him that within the next six months he will be with me in Heaven; that I will assist him at the hour of death, and that with me he shall 'follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth.'"

After having thus addressed them, he disappeared; they made their pilgrimage, returned in safety to England and delivered to the king the message sent him by the old man.

Let us learn from the life of Edward to be meek and humble in our deportment, always kind to our inferiors, and ready to assist the poor when they apply to us for help; doing so in a gentle manner, in order that they may not



feel too keenly the obligation they are under to us. Let us remember that sometimes it may be more difficult for them to ask than it is for us to give; therefore, like the good King Edward, cultivate within your hearts the tender flower of meekness; guard it jealously, for the Evil One is on the watch to pluck it from the garden of your soul. Satan knows that pride caused his fall, and that in the meek and lowly heart he has no place. Meditate upon the promises of Christ: "Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are the meek: for they shall possess the land."

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### FEAST OF THE EPIPHANY.

(January 6.)

(See Ecclesiastical Year, page 118.)

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### ST. RAYMOND.

(January 7.)

"Learning usefully employed."

ST. RAYMOND belonged to a noble Spanish family, he was by nature endowed with great talents, which a life devoted to study developed in the highest degree, so that even in his youth he was famous for his learning.

When very young he was made a professor in the celebrated university of Bologna, but his friend, the Bishop of Barcelona, the native city of Raymond, persuaded him to return. He was at once appointed to the office of canon in the cathedral and became distinguished not only for his eloquence, but for the holiness of his life.

But fearful of exposing himself to the dangerous flattery of his friends, Raymond resigned his honorary office, and became a member of the order of Oratorians, founded by St. Philip of Neri; many noble and wealthy men, animated by his example, joining at the same time.

Raymond was the confessor of a rich man named Peter Nolascus, whom he persuaded to use the means and influence possessed by him to free from their captivity the Christians held in slavery by the Moors, and together they succeeded in establishing a society for this purpose.

The Pope at one time sent a cardinal to Spain on a very important mission, Raymond was appointed to accompany him to the Spanish court, and as he never

refused to preach when asked, he was the means of converting many to God, by his fervid eloquence.

When he had accomplished his business, the cardinal desired Raymond to go with him to Rome, but he declined to do so, unless sent for by the Pope; he was accordingly invited by the Holy Father to visit the eternal city and was chosen by him to be his confessor, and charged with the difficult task of collecting and arranging in order the decrees of the different Popes. Seeing how faithfully and with what ability he fulfilled this commission, the Pope appointed him Archbishop of Terracona, but Raymond, whose soul was content in serving God in a comparatively humble state, became very ill when he heard of his promotion to that dignity. He petitioned the Pope to bestow it upon one more worthy of the honor, and aided by the powerful influence of some friends he at length succeeded in obtaining the Pope's consent to resign the proffered mitre.

Owing to his sedentary occupations his health at length gave way, and the physicians advised him to return to Spain as the only means of prolonging his life. He accordingly revisited his native city of Barcelona where he soon regained his strength; his presence among them was hailed with delight by his friends, whom he consoled by his advice, and encouraged in the practice of their holy religion.

He continued to write valuable works on theology, but when the dangerous heresy of the Waldenses made its appearance in Spain, Raymond, fearing lest even one soul should be lost, persuaded the king to use every means in his power to drive out from the land every vestige of this horrible doctrine, and at his request that learned doctor of the Church, St. Thomas of Aquinas, wrote an admirable work in refutation of this wicked heresy.

He entreated the king to have the word of God preached to the Saracens, who were all Mohammedans, and went with the king to an African Island where he succeeded in converting to Christianity all of the inhabitants. He had churches built, and erected a seminary where members of the order were instructed in the Hebrew and Arabic tongues, so that they might be enabled to preach in a language understood by the people. By his untiring zeal many Jews were converted, and ten thousand Moors were received into the fold of Christ.

God honored His servant by permitting many miracles to be wrought through his intercession, even in his lifetime and after his death, which happened when he had reached his hundredth year.

From the life of the holy and zealous Raymond we see how usefully learning can be employed in the cause of religion; and that before instructing others we should take good care to be thoroughly grounded ourselves in the knowledge of what we propose to teach. There is no study from which we can gain greater benefit than reading attentively the history of the Church, meditating upon the glorious deeds of her Saints and Martyrs, and striving to follow in their foot-

steps until we reach the end of our journey through life ; and then if we have persevered, shall we hear from the lips of our dear and compassionate Lord the consoling words : " Well done, thou good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of the Lord."

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## ST. SEVERIN.

(January 8.)

"Power of prayer."

ABOUT thirteen hundred years ago Attila, King of the Huns died, and his sons fought between themselves for the possession of the kingdom. St. Severin, who lived near the city of Asturis on the Danube, warned the clergy and the inhabitants that their city was threatened with destruction by the barbarians, but that by prayer, fasting, and alms-giving the disaster could be averted. They, however, paid no heed to his words, and as he had foretold, the city was razed to the ground, and not even a vestige of it remains to tell where it once stood.

St. Severin had left the place previously and proceeded to Coumanis, where he repeated his warnings, but the people would not listen to him, until an old man, who had escaped from Asturis, made his appearance among them and told of the cruelties practised by the enemy, and how the ruin of the city had been foretold by Severin, if the inhabitants would, not by penance and alms-giving, turn aside the wrath of God.

Meeting Severin in the street, the old man informed the people that he was the person who had called upon the citizens of Asturis to fast and pray, but they, scoffing at his advice, had suffered the consequences, and that now their city laid in ruins before their eyes. The Coumanians at once asked pardon of the Saint for not doing as he had advised them, and prayed and fasted for three days. At the close of the third day, an earthquake so terrified the savage hosts who were besieging the city, that they fled in every direction.

Once, when a great famine was raging in Vienna, the inhabitants of that city having heard of the wonderful sanctity of St. Severin, begged him to visit them ; but he sent them word to fast and pray for three days, and behold, at the end of the third day, provisions came pouring into the city, the people not forgetting to return thanks to God for His mercy.

The country at one time was infested by a band of robbers, and as the city was only defended by a small company of soldiers, the citizens suffered terribly from frequent incursions of these robbers. The captain of the guard, after consulting with St. Severin, determined to attack them, and disperse them if pos-



sible; the Saint told the commander to put his whole trust in God, and to treat with kindness any of the robbers he might capture. Having great faith in the prayers of St. Severin, the soldiers attacked the robbers, defeated them, and brought back many of them as prisoners. They were carried before the Saint, who gave them food, and spoke to them with tenderness, showing them the wickedness of their course of life; he then sent them back to their homes, telling them to serve God in future.

It was the desire of St. Severin to lead a hermit's life, but the crowds of people who constantly beset him, asking his advice in temporal as well as spiritual affairs, prevented him from carrying out his wish in that respect.

A man was once brought to him named Rufus, who for twelve years had suffered from rheumatism of the severest kind; his mother earnestly begged the Saint to cure her son. Severin told her that he could do nothing, but that all things were possible with God. He advised her to give alms, so as to enlist the prayers of the poor in behalf of her sick son, but the pious mother had already given away all her money, and as she had nothing left, offered to give her clothes, reserving for herself only what was absolutely necessary. St. Severin seeing her good will told her to keep her clothes, and then laying his hand upon her son, prayed over him. When he had finished, the cripple rose to his feet perfectly cured, and walked to his home, many miles distant. The people could hardly credit their senses when they saw returning in sound health, the man who had been bed-ridden for so many years.

Several congregations petitioned the Bishop to give them Severin as their pastor, thinking that the mere fact of his presence among them would put an end to all their difficulties. It once happened that some of his parishioners were present at the worship of a certain idol; he reproached them for it, telling them that they had committed a mortal sin, but they denied having been present at the idol worship. Finding it useless to argue with them the Saint ordered his congregation to fast for three days, and then to assemble in the church, each bearing a wax candle. The people did as they were commanded, and while Severin was reciting some prayers, the candles of those who were free from the charge of idolatry were suddenly lighted, while those who had denied their faith by attending a false worship, still held in their hands their candles unlighted. Filled with confusion, they openly confessed their guilt and did penance for their sins.

At another time, the country in the neighborhood of Vienna was visited by swarms of locusts; the people again had recourse to Severin, and entreated his prayers in their behalf. He told them that in order to draw down upon themselves the mercy of God, they must fast, pray, and give alms, and not go to their fields for the space of three days. All followed his directions, with the exception of one poor man, who attempted to chase the locusts away; at the end of the third day the farmers went out into their fields, and found their crops

uninjured (for the locusts had in the meantime disappeared), but the man who had disobeyed the injunctions of the Saint discovered, to his great dismay, that he had lost his entire crop. He returned to his home with a saddened heart, and full of remorse for having neglected to obey the directions of the holy Severin. When the others heard of what had happened to the poor man, they resolved to go at once to the Saint and tell him what had occurred, but the Saint told them to learn a lesson from what had evidently been the punishment of God, and to obey their pastors when applied to for advice. He then said that it would be a work of great charity, if out of their abundance, they should supply the wants of one whose error would be a life-long warning to them. They did so, and a collection was made for the man that enabled him to support his family until the next harvest.\* There are many other events in the life of St. Severin, showing the power of his prayers before the throne of God, but those that we have given are sufficient to establish his claim as belonging to the elect of God.

In concluding, dear reader, the record of one whose petitions were always heard on account of the purity and holiness of his life, let us remember, that if we can not equal, we can at least imitate the Saint in asking from God in all sincerity and confidence whatever we stand most in need of, for has not the Saviour said: "Ask, and you shall receive; seek, and you shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you."

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## ST. JULIAN.

(January 9.)

"Gratitude for being a Christian."

IN the lives of the Saints we find no less than thirty-six martyrs of the name of Julian, and it would seem like injustice to the others, did we select one in particular, when all alike sealed with their blood the confession of their faith in Jesus Christ. We will therefore give a short sketch of the persecutions suffered by the early Christians, so that our gratitude will be increased for having been deemed worthy by Almighty God, of possessing a religion that we should glory not only to live for, but to die for, if necessary.

When Christianity first dawned upon the world, the Roman emperors possessed almost unlimited power in the countries where it commenced to spread. They assumed to themselves rights over the lives and properties of their subjects at all times, but when a small portion of their people embraced the Christian religion, their rage knew no bounds. Every species of torture that could be thought of was used upon those Christians who openly confessed their faith in Christ crucified.

The Pagans imagined that the death of Christians appeased the anger of their gods, and the emperors dreaded the growth of a worship that would in a measure put an end to their arbitrary rule. During the reign of the cruel Nero, a fire once broke out in Rome which nearly destroyed the entire city, and it was suspected by many that Nero himself was the cause of the disaster, in order that he might have a new pretext for persecuting the Christians, whom he charged with setting fire to the city. He accordingly commanded that as many as could be found should be seized, some sewed up in sacks, so as to be rendered helpless, and wild beasts then let loose upon them; others were crucified, and some were covered with pitch, and at night set on fire, when they would burn slowly to death, suffering the most excruciating tortures.

Domitian also was a cruel persecutor; he it was who ordered St. John, the Evangelist, to be cast into a kettle of boiling oil, from which, however, the Saint, by the wonderful providence of God, came out uninjured; and he caused the death of St. Antipas, by having him placed in a large statue made of metal, which was heated until the holy martyr expired.

A religion calling upon its adherents to practice the virtues of humility and self-denial was too much like a reproach to the proud and sensual heathens; and whatever calumny was uttered against the Christians was believed by them. Emperors who were otherwise just and merciful in their rule, did not hesitate to use every means in their power to exterminate if possible the little band of Christians; thus we see how perfectly fulfilled were the words of our Saviour, "Lo, the hour cometh that whosoever killeth you will think that he doth a service to God."

The Jews artfully incited the people against the Christians, and a most terrible persecution broke out in Lyons one hundred and seventy-seven years after the birth of Christ. The magistrates, soldiers, and the entire populace raged like madmen in their hatred to the Christians. They pretended to believe that it was a part of the Christian religion to eat alive little children; and many other slanders were circulated in order to fan the flame of persecution.

A Pagan festival was to be celebrated and great crowds had assembled in Lyons, and the governor in his desire to please the people, gathered together all the Christians whom he had imprisoned, and then called upon them to renounce their faith; but all remained firm; those even who had neglected to practice the duties of their holy religion, came boldly forward and declared their willingness to die for the sake of Christ. They were consequently all put to death; some were beheaded, and others thrown into the arena, there to be devoured by lions and tigers. The historians of that time say that the streets of the city were running with the blood of the Christian martyrs.

Alexandria, in Egypt, was also the scene of horrible persecutions, by order of the Emperor Severus; the number of Christians instead of decreasing, seemed to multiply, and as they grew up in strength, the rage and hatred of the



Pagans increased in proportion ; for they knew that the success of Christianity would put an end to the worship of the idols distributed over the land. • Hence the habit of accusing the Christians of being the cause of war, pestilence, and famine, and, in fact, of every evil.

The emperor Maximus had only the priests put to death, but sent into exile all who remained firm in their faith, confiscating also their property. Decius, however, made no distinction ; he sent orders to the different governors of the provinces, to use the utmost vigilance in hunting down like wild beasts, the Christians scattered through his dominions, and it finally came to pass that parents would denounce their children, and children their parents, if either the one or the other had become Christians.

The emperor Valerian seemed at first kindly disposed towards the Christians, but at last was induced to order a fresh persecution. Many were put to death, and others compelled to work in the mines, a punishment worse than death. This persecution lasted for three years, when Valerian was taken prisoner by the Persians, and for a while the poor Christians enjoyed a little security.

While this peace lasted, the number of conversions became immense, and churches were built, where they were enabled to worship God ; but suddenly a new persecution commenced under the emperor Diocletian, who was told that the Christians had set fire to his palace, which was of course a great slander. Every Catholic church was destroyed, and the sacred writings of the Fathers burned. In Nicomedia, men, women, and children were burned alive, and those slaves who had embraced Christianity, were thrown into the sea. New torments and instruments of death were invented ; some of the Christians were cut in pieces, some were suspended by their feet, with their heads downward and the fire kindled beneath their faces, thus causing them to die in the most horrible agony ; some would have their noses, ears, hands, and other parts of their bodies mutilated, while others would be stretched over a coal fire and slowly roasted to death. Once it happened that a whole regiment of soldiers who were Christians were surrounded and cut to pieces by order of the emperor.

Countless volumes have been written concerning the heroic deeds of the martyrs, but many thousands have died whose martyrdom was known only to God.

From this very imperfect sketch, dear reader, of the sufferings endured by some of the early Christians, you can learn how dearly bought is your inheritance as Christians—prize it above all things. The tree that was planted by Jesus Christ, and whose soil has been enriched by His own most precious blood, and by the blood of many martyrs, now stretches its branches over the whole earth. Remember that if you are not called upon to die for your faith, your obligation only becomes the greater to live as a Christian. Your holy religion is “the hidden treasure” the “pearl of great price” spoken of in the Gospel.

Thank God daily for all the benefits you have received from Him, but especially for the great and inestimable gift of faith.

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## ST. CHRISTINA.

(January 10.)

"Duties of servants"

CHRISTINA was the daughter of poor parents, and in her youth watched over the flocks of her father. The time that would otherwise have hung heavily on her hands, was spent by her in meditating upon the wonders of creation, so that while the sheep were quietly grazing before her eyes, the mind of the pious little shepherdess was soaring far away, her thoughts fixed upon heavenly things.

By leading a life separated from the world, and living as it were with God, Christina attained great perfection; in her conduct she was pure and holy, always respectful to those with whom she associated, and none dared in her presence to speak with levity on the subject of religion.

Her brothers tried to compel her to marry, but she had already chosen Jesus Christ as her bridegroom, and to Him she resolved to be faithful. Her refusal to comply with their wishes, however, greatly enraged them, and one of them, in the excess of his fury, beat her in the most cruel manner. She accordingly left her father's house, not knowing to what lengths they might proceed, and went to live in the service of a family residing in a city some miles distant from her home.

In order that she might have time to pray, she demanded no wages; she ate but little, and wore the cast-off garments of the family. She always went barefooted, and fasted so rigorously that her mistress would insist upon her eating. Every Friday she would retire to her chamber and there meditate upon the passion and death of Christ, until her soul would be filled with such profound grief that tears would stream from her eyes, and she would seem to experience in her own person the agony endured by her suffering Saviour while hanging upon the cross.

Christina determined to make a pilgrimage to Rome, and after a long and tiresome journey she arrived there, and was hospitably received in the house of a pious widow, who presented her with a complete suit of excellent clothes, but Christina thinking that the poor needed them more than she did, gave them away, and continued to wear her old ones.

After a while she succeeded in establishing a convent with the assistance of some other holy women, where they lived a poor but holy life, and one full of

consolation to hearts that had given up all for God. They were extremely charitable to the poor, and once when there was a great want throughout the city, Christina gave the very dress she wore and the last piece of money in the house, in order to relieve a family who had applied to her for assistance. Upon the door of the convent she had a sign placed, inviting the poor to enter and share with them their food, and her example in this respect was followed by many wealthy inhabitants.

When seventy years old she was attacked with paralysis, and was confined to her bed for three years, but as she was greatly beloved by her sisters, they carried her every morning into the chapel, where she assisted at the divine sacrifice of the Mass. When dying, her whole face was lighted up with the animation and beauty of youth; she said she felt like a child that had been separated from its mother, but who would soon be re-united with her, never again to be parted.

Even during her life-time she was regarded as a Saint, for, owing to the holiness of her life, the people with one accord called her Christina, meaning a Christ-like woman, though her real name was Oringa. After her death many persons came to look upon her face; it retained the beautiful expression that had illuminated her countenance in her last moments; but it is related that among those who thronged to see her, was a very wicked woman, and that when she approached the dead body of the Saint, the arms were raised and the pure features covered by the hands that had never been used but in doing good to her fellow creatures. Her body was preserved from corruption, and many miracles were performed after her death by asking her intercession.

If it is the will of God, dear reader, that you occupy an humble position in life; do not repine and envy those above you; we are all the children of a Heavenly Father, all are dear alike to Him. Learn from the life of the servant maid Christina, to serve God to the best of your ability. Be scrupulous in fulfilling the obligations of your holy religion, be prudent and modest in your conduct, and dress plainly. Never speak disrespectfully to your superiors or about them, remember that it is God's will that you should work out your salvation in that state of life in which He has placed you. The lowly violet is as precious and beautiful in His sight, as the most costly diamond, for both are the work of His hands; it may be easier to save your soul as a servant, than if you had been born to a throne. Strive only after the imperishable joys of heaven, and your heart will be filled with peace. St. James says: "Be humble in the sight of the Lord and he will exalt you."

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## ST. THEODOSIUS.

(January 11.)

P "Solitude."

IN the time of St. Theodosius, it was customary in the Catholic Church to read to the people passages from the Holy Scriptures, and as Theodosius was a very accomplished scholar, he was appointed to the office of reader. What he read made a deep impression upon his heart, so that his desire to live only for God increased daily.

He went on a pilgrimage to Jerusalem, visited the holy places, and begged Almighty God to make known to him his vocation. He made the acquaintance of a very saintly hermit, named Longinus, who lived in the ruins of a tower, and from him Theodosius received his first lessons in the art of attaining Christian perfection.

For a long time they dwelt together in peace and harmony, when a wealthy lady, having erected a church on the road leading to Bethlehem, petitioned Longinus to place over it as pastor the pious and humble Theodosius, but he, preferring to live in obscurity, refused to accept the offer, until commanded to do so by his superior. The fame of his sanctity spread far and wide, and great crowds always assembled to hear him preach, but he, fearing to be led away by the praises of men, determined to leave the world for a second time, and to serve God in solitude. He therefore gave up the charge of the congregation, and retired to a lonely mountain, where he lived alone with God for thirty years.

He spent his whole time in meditation and prayer, ate sparingly of the roots he gathered in the desert, and allowed himself but little sleep in order to gain the more time for his devotions.

Like the bees, who seek even in distant and lonely places flowers abounding in honey, so many who sought to imitate Theodosius in giving up all for God, followed him in his self-appointed exile, and begged to remain with him, in order that they might learn from him the best method of practising the duties of their holy religion. To impress more fully upon them the vanity of the world they had forsaken, and the uncertainty of life, Theodosius caused a grave to be dug, and once when all had as usual assembled around it, he said, "Which one of us will be the first to fill it?" Basilicus, a priest, coming forward, knelt at his feet and said, "Bestow upon me thy blessing, for I will be the first," and in a few days he died, singing the praises of God until the last moment of his life.

Finding that his followers daily increased, Theodosius determined to build a convent, in which all could serve God according to the dictates of their hearts. A part of the day was spent in cultivating the earth, so that their support should not be a burden upon any one, the rest of the time was devoted to religious exercises. They also practised works of mercy by entertaining all pilgrims, and

in giving whatever they had to the poor, hospitals were also established, where the sick were nursed.

A dangerous heresy at one time spread rapidly among the Christians, Anastasius, emperor of Greece, was one of the first to embrace it, and he endeavored by every means in his power to win over to his opinions Theodosius, whom he regarded as a Saint. Although the emperor had always been a kind and liberal friend to him, Theodosius resisted firmly every attempt to draw him from his allegiance to the true faith. He wrote a letter to Anastasius in which he said, that he would rather die at once in the cause of Christ, than live for years in ease and luxury as a heretic.

So submissive was he to the will of God in all things, that when his body, enfeebled by age and ill health, laid stretched upon an humble pallet, he would not permit his attendants to pray for his recovery, saying to them: "I have received nothing but benefits from the hand of God, let me suffer, or I shall have no merit in his sight; at the last day I may perhaps hear the words, 'In thy lifetime, thou did'st receive thy reward.' I will rather endure now, all that He ordains, than suffer for an eternity."

Theodosius reached the advanced age of one hundred and five years, and Almighty God testified by many miracles, worked before and after his death, how acceptable to Him had been the many mortifications practiced by His humble and pious servant. In meditating upon the life of the holy Theodosius, we extract from it the many advantages to be derived from living only for God; for in holy solitude the soul becomes laden down, as it were, with rich fruits; every day new beauties are unfolded, and extraordinary dispensations of grace offered for its acceptance. Moses lived a life of solitude for the space of forty years, until God called him to be the leader of His chosen people. St. John, the Baptist, lived a solitary life in the desert, until the time came for him to "prepare the way of the Lord." Our Saviour lived in obscurity for thirty years, it might almost be called a life of solitude, for He lived alone with His blessed mother; and as a preparation for the terrible agony He was called upon to suffer, He passed forty days alone in the desert. Even during the last three years of His sacred life, He would leave the disciples in order to be alone with His heavenly Father.

It was for this reason that Theodosius desired to dwell in solitude, he knew how much easier of access was the kingdom of Heaven to a heart unburdened by the cares of the world; for does not experience teach us, that a light particle rises in the air, but that any thing heavy is borne down to the earth. Let us therefore, dear reader, endeavor, if possible, to spend some moments in the day alone with God. Remember the saying of St. Augustin: "He whom God does not satisfy, is insatiable."

## ST. ARCADIUS.

(January 12.)

"Acceptable sacrifices."

IN the time of Arcadius, the Christians were cruelly persecuted, and many were obliged to conceal themselves, in order to save their lives. Among those who fled from the city was Arcadius, his absence, however, was not discovered, until in accordance with the emperor's decree, all Christians were called upon to bring offerings to the gods. His house was searched, and as he could not be found, one of his relatives was seized and dragged to prison; he was then questioned by the governor as to the place in which his cousin had concealed himself, but as he refused to gratify the governor's curiosity, he was sent back to prison, and barbarously treated.

Meanwhile Arcadius had heard of all that had transpired, and as he was too generous to permit others to suffer for him, he presented himself before the governor, in order to procure the freedom of his cousin. He was told that if he would but offer sacrifice to the gods, his property should be restored, and honors bestowed upon him, but Arcadius answered: "The faith of Christ satisfies all my wants, and to die for it will be my gain." His speech was communicated to the governor, who was greatly enraged, and he accordingly ordered Arcadius to be put to death. It was decreed that he should suffer prolonged agonies, and that the executioner should commence by first cutting off the joints of his fingers, and then his hands and arms, then his feet and legs, until in fact his whole person was mutilated. But the holy martyr's joy seemed to increase as the different parts were severed from his body, and he exclaimed: "O happy members, found worthy of suffering for Christ; I never loved you until now He has claimed you as His own, and I now feel that I too belong to Him."

After so many hundreds of years have passed away, we look upon the Christian heroism of the glorious martyr Arcadius, with astonishment and veneration; he shines like a bright star in the dark days of the Church, when so many were called upon to seal with their blood the confession of their faith in Christ crucified. Although we live in an age when the truths of the Gospel are taught in every part of the world, and it may not be necessary for us to suffer as did Arcadius, nevertheless it becomes us to serve God, by sanctifying every member of our body by avoiding sin, thereby rendering them acceptable offerings unto Him, for remember what our divine Saviour says: "It is better for thee to enter into life maimed, than having two hands to go into hell, into unquenchable fire."

Remember how easy it is to offend Almighty God by means of an eye, a hand, or any other member of the body; if by reading improper books you have endangered your salvation, make the firm resolution of henceforth sanc-



tifying your eyesight, and the offering will be as acceptable to God as if you had undergone the torments endured by the early Christians, such as piercing the eyes with hot irons. If you regard any one with feelings of enmity, it will be an act of Christian heroism for you to stretch forth the hand of friendship, and if it is rejected, you will not be the loser; if it is done from a pure love of God, it is as pleasing in His sight, as if the hand had been dissevered from your body. If your heart is fixed upon an unworthy object, struggle to obtain the mastery, and beg God to assist you in your endeavors; rest assured that He will come to the rescue, and the offering will be all the more acceptable to Him, inasmuch as you have "fought the good fight," and present unto Him the crown of victory.

Remember that all we suffer in behalf of Christ upon earth, will be repaid to us in Heaven; every thing that we give up for His sake, will be returned to us, and our portion "no man shall take from us." The earthly torments of Arcadius were changed into eternal joys, therefore let us resolve to make every sacrifice in order to escape the horror of dwelling forever in a place "where the worm dieth not and where the fire is not extinguished."

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## ST. JUTTA.

(January 13.)

"True Piety."

ST. JUTTA was a young, handsome, and very wealthy widow, she received many excellent offers, and was urged by her father to marry again; but she declared her intention of living only for God. Her father then asked the Bishop, whose steward he was, to induce her to change her resolution, but when Jutta communicated to the holy prelate her reasons for remaining single he not only desisted from his persuasions, but even encouraged her to be faithful to the Bridegroom whom she had chosen, and bestowed upon her his blessing.

From this time her life was one of self-denial; her beautiful dresses and jewels were sold, and the proceeds given to the poor, and she allowed herself but little rest in order to gain the more time for her devotions, spoke but seldom, and then always with prudence, ate sparingly of the plainest food, gave liberally to the poor, and would always receive kindly any traveler who solicited her hospitality. She concealed her austere manner of life from her friends, for what she did, she did for God alone, and not to be praised by men.

But her charity knew no limit; in the vicinity of the city was a hospital for lepers, and owing to the horrible nature of the disease, few nurses could be found to attend the poor creatures in their extremity; but Jutta when only twenty-

three years old, left a home of luxury, and did for the love of God, that which the poorest person in the city could not be persuaded to do for any amount of money. She waited upon the lepers at their meals, bathed their hands and feet, washed their clothes, and did every thing in her power to make them comfortable; serving them as faithfully as if they belonged to the honored ones of earth, instead of being numbered, as they were, among the outcasts of creation. She lived in the hospital for eleven years, and many who witnessed her heroic charity were led to imitate her example.

Her biographer, who knew her personally, says, "No one ever equaled the saintly Jutta in her tender compassion for sinners. Even when the cold hand of death was laid upon her, her unbounded charity manifested itself. She caused all under her care to assemble in her room, and then for the last time instructed, warned, encouraged, and comforted them, showing thereby how dear to her heart was their eternal salvation. During the night of the Epiphany, she attempted to rise as usual, in order that she might kneel and offer up her prayer to God, but finding herself too feeble, and consumed with a burning fever, she laid upon her bed and suffered the greatest agony until daylight, for she would not disturb the rest of any one. In the morning she received the holy Viaticum, and foretold the hour of her death, and when she felt the time approaching, her sweet countenance was lighted up with a heavenly smile, and she died immediately after having uttered the words, 'O Lord, into Thy hand do I commend my spirit.'"

After reading the life of the holy Jutta, dear reader, it is impossible for us not to see how eminently practical was the Saint in her piety; she was earnest in her prayers, received the sacraments regularly, performed most heroic deed, of charity in voluntarily nursing those who were suffering from a loathsome disease, was always kind to the poor, and merciful to sinners. But how many Christians are there—, who go daily to Mass, have stated hours for prayer, frequent the sacraments, and belong to numerous confraternities, but are nevertheless full of the spirit of pride and contradiction, preferring their own will to every thing else, and are perhaps harsh and repugnant in their manners to those with whom they associate. Sometimes the merest trifle will awaken their wrath, and they will not hesitate to form rash judgments. When they give alms, it is done in an ostentatious manner, and very often bestowed upon persons who do not need it. How many Christians are guilty of receiving holy communion, while their hearts are filled with hatred for a fellow creature. Remember the words of our Saviour: "By this shall all men know that you are all my disciples, if you have love one for another;" and St. Paul says, "If I should distribute all my goods to feed the poor, and if I should deliver my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing." St. John also writes: "He that loveth not, knoweth not, for God is charity. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death."

We see therefore, dear reader, how necessary it is for us to exercise constantly, in all that we say and do, the beautiful and holy virtue of charity; for as the body is dead without the soul, so is the soul dead without charity. Let us endeavor to live not only according to the letter, but according to the spirit of our holy religion; let us not appear empty-handed at the day of judgment, but be found clothed in the garment of righteousness, and holding in our hands the ever-blooming flower of charity.

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## ST. FELIX.

(January 14.)

"Confidence in God."

A LEARNED historian writes, "So numerous and great were the miracles of St. Felix, that we should be inclined to doubt them, if they were not related by the holy priest, St. Paulinus."

Felix was the son of a rich officer in the Roman army, and from his very childhood endeavored to serve God, although his father was a Pagan. He resided with the Bishop of Nola, and when he had reached the proper age, was ordained priest by him. When the Bishop became convinced of his piety and fidelity, he appointed him his successor.

About two hundred and fifty years after the birth of Christ, a terrible persecution broke out against the Christians, but especially against the pastors of the Church. The Bishop of Nola, fearing that he might fall a victim to the blind fury of the populace, fled and found refuge on the side of a mountain. Felix, however, remained in the Bishop's house, but the soldiers seized him, placed irons upon his hands and feet and dragged him off to prison.

In the meantime the aged Bishop, having no one to attend to his wants, was in danger of dying from hunger and cold, but by the watchful providence of God, an angel unbarred the doors of the prison in which Felix was confined, and conducted him to the cave where the Bishop was concealed. There he discovered the holy prelate lying upon the ground, almost helpless from the sufferings he had undergone. Felix looked around for some means of reviving him, and to his great joy found some grapes hanging upon a vine. He gathered them, and having pressed them to the lips of the starving Bishop, brought back the life that was slowly ebbing away from want of proper nourishment.

When the good Bishop had sufficiently regained his strength, Felix conveyed him into the city, and having placed him in the care of some pious people, was preparing to leave the house, when the Bishop hearing of it called him to his bedside and having nothing else to give him, bestowed upon him his blessing,



and "from this benediction," says St. Paulinus, "did Felix derive the power to work many miracles."

Felix commenced again to give instructions to the people in the Christian faith. The magistrates hearing of it sent soldiers to the Bishop's house with orders to bring Felix before them, but the soldiers not finding him there, sought for him in the public places, where they found him teaching the children. They, however knew him not, for it pleased Almighty God to hide him by a miracle from their sight. After they had left, Felix found means to conceal himself in the opening of a wall, but some person passing by, discovered his retreat, and sent word to the authorities. But it so happened, that before the soldiers reached the place, by a special miracle the opening was completely covered by a cobweb, and his persecutors passed by the spot, not dreaming that he whom they sought, heard and saw every movement of theirs. St. Paulinus again says, "O the wonderful ways of God, unless it is His will, towers built of stone are no protection to us, but instructed by him a little spider weaves her web, and protects from the fury of his enemies the faithful servant of God!"

When the shadows of night approached, Felix left his hiding-place and concealed himself in a dry well, where he remained for some time; a pious woman who dwelt near bringing him by stealth whatever she could spare from her humble table. The persecutions finally ceased and Felix was enabled to return to the city, where his presence was hailed with joy by the Christians.

It was the unanimous wish of the people to have him for their Bishop, as the old Bishop was now dead; but he, dreading the responsibilities of the office, succeeded in having another priest appointed to the dignity. The Christians having been reinstated in their rights besought Felix to reclaim the property he had lost also, but he only answered, "I do not want back what I have lost in the cause of Christ; let me follow my Master in His poverty, and He will not forsake me."

The crowning virtue in the character of St. Felix, was his unbounded confidence in God; he loved God above all things, and consequently despised the fleeting pleasures of the world.

Let us imitate, dear reader, the example of St. Felix, remembering what our Lord says: "Be not solicitous for your life, what you shall eat, nor for your body, what you shall put on. Is not the life more than the meat? and the body more than the raiment?"

He who puts his trust in the Lord will never be confounded.

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## ST. MAURUS.

(January 15.)

"Good Example."

THERE lived in a wilderness of Italy five hundred years after the birth of Christ, a pious man who had retired from the wicked world in order to serve God alone. But even in his solitude temptations assailed him, and to overcome them he practiced the greatest austerities. Shepherds and other persons who accidentally discovered his retreat, spread far and wide the fame of his sanctity, and many came to see him, who by his advice and example were induced to renounce the pleasures of the world. This holy man was no other than St. Benedict, the founder of the magnificent order of Benedictines, whose convents are now established in all parts of the Christian world, and whose members have always been distinguished for their learning, and for the sanctity of their lives.

Maurus, when very young, was sent by his parents to receive a Christian education in the convent where St. Benedict was Superior, and although many others were sent there for the same purpose, he speedily attracted the special notice of St. Benedict, who very soon perceived evidences of extraordinary piety in the youthful Maurus. He would voluntarily fast, pray, and keep silence, and would strive in every way to imitate the example of St. Benedict and the other monks, so that it became necessary to restrain, rather than to urge him in the performance of works of piety and self-denial.

The holy lives led by St. Benedict and his brethren soon became known to the Christian world, and a French Bishop sent messengers to Benedict requesting him to send some members of the order to his diocese, promising to build a convent for them. St. Benedict selected Maurus and four other monks, who left at once for France, but when they reached their place of destination, they heard that the Bishop had died, and his successor refused to do any thing for them. But God came to their assistance; Flores, a nobleman of great wealth, obtained permission from King Theodobert to receive the good priests, and very soon afterwards, at his own expense, he built for them a convent upon his estate. He committed to their care his only son, a child of eight years, and the rapid progress the little one made in acquiring the true knowledge of God, made such an impression upon Flores, that he at once resigned an important office held by him at court, and entered the convent, there to do penance for the rest of his life. Many others were led to imitate his example, and noblemen who had previously lived only for the world, forsook its vanities and became humble members of the order. Thus it happened that in a few years, one hundred and forty persons were admitted as postulants. The pious Flores soon died in the peace of God, and Maurus feeling that his days too were numbered, requested the monks to elect another Superior, but they begged him to appoint his own

successor, and he accordingly named as such the son of Flores, who had become an excellent and holy follower of St. Benedict.

From the little we have written concerning Maurus, we see the force of a good example. When a child he followed in the footsteps of the saintly Benedict; as he grew in years and in the grace of God, others were impelled to imitate him in the practice of the Christian virtues of humility and self-denial; as in the case of Flores, the good example given by the father was followed by the son, who in due time became the Superior of the convent, having been appointed to fill that important office by St. Maurus himself.

A good example is a sermon that the servant can preach to the master without fear of offending him; it is one that the unlearned can preach to the wisest, and a way in which the child can instruct the parent.

We are not conscious, perhaps, how much depends upon the example we give to children; if it is good, it is like sunshine to the tender plant, it encourages the growth of the most beautiful flowers of piety within their youthful hearts. How often do we see fathers and mothers give way to angry bursts of passion in the presence of their children; can they expect their little ones to restrain their tempers? How often do we find persons of mature age using improper language in the hearing of the young. Remember what our dear Lord says, "Whatsoever shall scandalize one of these little ones that believe in me; it were better for him that a mill-stone were hanged about his neck and he were cast into the sea."

Let us resolve therefore, dear reader, to do all in our power to further the interests of our holy religion, by giving upon all occasions a good example to those around us. "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father who is in heaven."

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## ST. HONORATUS.

(January 16.)

"Force of Example."

HONORATUS was the son of a noble family, and although his parents were heathens, he became when quite young, converted to Christianity. While preparing for baptism, his father tried every means in his power to win him back to the worship of the false gods, but Honoratus remained firm. Referring to his trials at that time, he said: "This life will soon pass away and I am determined to devote mine to God. In His holy temple I am taught to be humble and virtuous in my conduct; at home, I am encouraged to give way to the most unruly passions; at church, Christ invites me to the banquet of His love; at home,



the devil tries to tempt me with the fleeting pleasures of the world. But I know well that earthly joys are perishable; God alone will satisfy the desires of my heart. I will therefore hasten to free myself from the evil one; my joy shall be my faith; my companion, wisdom; my pleasure, to practice virtue; and my only treasure, Christ."

Honoratus grew daily in the grace of God. He mortified his body to strengthen his soul, and his life of self-denial was not without its effect, for his elder brother, Veneratus, seeing the difference between the pure life led by Honoratus, and the sensual one indulged in by the other members of the family, became a Christian, so that the two encouraged each other to practice the duties of their holy religion, and in striving to the end to attain Christian perfection upon earth, and the crown of righteousness in heaven promised by Almighty God to all who do His holy will.

From what we have written concerning Honoratus, we see that it is possible to serve God, although surrounded by temptations. If he had yielded to the entreaties of his Pagan father, his brother would never have become a Christian, consequently we see the force of a good example. How often do we hear the expression, 'Others do it,' used; should that be any reason for our doing things that we know will displease God? Remember the words of our Saviour: "Enter ye in at the narrow gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way that leadeth to destruction, and many there are who go in thereat. How narrow is the gate, and straight is the way that leadeth to life: and few there are that find it." Matt. 7: 13-14.

If we do as the world does, we shall walk always in the broad path, but to enter into the joys of the kingdom of heaven, we must first pass through the 'narrow gate,' that is to say, we must serve God, not man. If unfortunately you live among those who do not edify you by their lives, take your crucifix in your hands and meditate upon what God has done for you.

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## ST. ANTHONY.

(January 17.)

"Temptations."

WHILE yet a young man, St. Anthony resolved to quit the world and to live only for God; he therefore distributed his immense wealth among the poor, entrusted his sister to the care of pious people, and from that time led a life of prayer, mortification, and chastity. But the stronger he grew in virtue, the stronger became the temptations the devil placed constantly before his eyes; the honors and riches he had renounced, the pleasures he might have enjoyed,

and the folly of having embraced a life so full of austerity while still young. The wicked machinations of the tempter cast a dark cloud upon the soul of Anthony, and for a time oppressed him with sadness, but he kept his eyes fixed upon the splendor and majesty of God, and soon the shadows disappeared, leaving him in peace.

But the devil was not thus to be easily foiled, he resorted to other means in order to accomplish his design, and for that purpose, filled the mind of Anthony with wicked thoughts and desires; but the Saint fought for the mastery, with the Christian weapons of prayer, fasting, and mortification, and in the end triumphed over the evil one.

Although successful in having resisted so many temptations, Anthony nevertheless continued to use the greatest precaution, for fear of their returning. He remembered the words of the holy Scriptures, "Be sober and watch, for your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, goeth about seeking whom he may devour."

St. Anthony, after having escaped the snares of the devil, saw in a vision our Saviour seated at the right hand of God, and he said to him, "Dear Lord, where hast Thou been? I have had great need of Thee;" and a voice answered, "I have been with thee in the midst of thy temptations, I witnessed thy struggles, and seeing thy good will, gave thee the victory."

In fighting against temptation, it is absolutely necessary that we should be sincere in our desire to overcome it, and then to put our whole trust in God, who will not forsake us.

Many persons came to consult with St. Anthony in regard to the state of their souls, and when they would relate to him how often they were tempted to commit sin, he would say, "We all know that nothing evil comes from God, the devil was a fallen angel, his malice is the result of his own free will, and feeling now the consequences of his sin, he is constantly on the alert to infuse into our hearts and minds the poison of sin, for he knows now the folly of having rebelled against God, and in despair, tries to win souls from Christ. By prayer and fasting you will weaken his hold upon you, but never think yourself safe from his attacks, never permit yourself to be charmed by his promises, or terrified by his threats, for he is a liar from the beginning of the world, and seeks to alarm those who desire to be converted to God. Adhere firmly to the cause of Christ, for the devil is powerless where true virtue reigns supreme; he could not even enter into the herd of swine unless it had been the will of God. The best defense we can offer in opposition to the infernal malice of the devil, is a pure life and a firm faith, for if there is the slightest spark of evil in our hearts, he will kindle it into a fire that will consume us, as he did the avarice of Judas, who for thirty pieces of silver betrayed his Saviour, but who afterwards, in despair for what he had done, put an end to his own wretched life."

Once several pious men met in the cell of St. Anthony, to consult with him

as to the easiest manner of attaining perfection. Their conference lasted the entire night, and among the questions discussed, was the best safeguard to be used against the snares of the devil. One maintained that prayer and fasting would always conquer him, another said that by leading a life of poverty and seclusion from the world, we should escape his assaults, and the last speaker declared, that by a life of chastity and the practice of works of mercy, no entrance would be found in the heart by which Satan could enter. St. Anthony listened patiently to what was said, and after all had finished he gave his opinion: "All the means mentioned by you are necessary, dear brethren, but experience teaches us that something else is required; I have seen persons who constantly practiced the virtues of which you have spoken, but who nevertheless, by a sudden and unexpected temptation, have been led into grievous sin. What was wanting in their case, is as requisite in ours, and that is precaution, without which we are sure to fall. Let us therefore always be on the look-out for fear of the citadel being taken, and all will be well with us."

St. Anthony once in a vision saw the whole earth covered with the nets and snares of the devil, and he said to himself, "Who can escape?" and a voice answered him aloud "He who is truly humble."

It happened once that a very good and pious Christian named Eulogius, found in the street a poor cripple forsaken by every one, and his heart was filled with pity for the miserable creature, and asking God to bestow upon him the gift of patience, he made a vow to take the poor man home, and to care for him as long as he lived. For fifteen years they dwelt together in peace and harmony, when the cripple at once commenced to give way to the most ungovernable bursts of anger, reproaching Eulogius for every thing that he did for him, and at last became almost insupportable. In speaking of it to his friends, Eulogius declared that he could no longer endure it, although he was afraid to break his vow and drive the cripple into the street. He was advised by some persons to consult St. Anthony, who reprimanded them both. "The ingratitude of the cripple, and your desire to send him off after nursing him for fifteen years, are temptations from the devil, who knows that you both will soon die and who desires to snatch from your grasp the reward of your patience. Go home, therefore, and live in peace with one another, that the angel of death may find all well with you when he comes to visit you." Eulogius did as he was told; returned to his home, became reconciled with the cripple, and died forty days after his interview with St. Anthony; the poor cripple dying three days after Eulogius.

Man has been tempted by the evil one from the beginning, and will be until the end of time. When the devil tempted our first parents he reasoned with them, and they listened to his voice, thereby bringing down upon themselves and upon their posterity, the wrath of God. He cited passages of Scripture when he tempted our Saviour in the desert, and rest assured that he leaves no



means untried to deceive and ruin all who falter in the path of virtue. If the mind is ill at ease, if you feel yourself growing weak in your efforts to subdue the wicked promptings of your enemy the devil, lose no time in seeking the advice of a prudent confessor; lay open to him the secrets of your heart, and from that moment peace and quiet will be your portion.

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## ST. PETER'S CHAIR.

(January 18.)

THE festival of to-day is celebrated in commemoration of the establishment of Christianity in Rome by St. Peter, and of his installment there as the first pontiff of the Catholic and Apostolic Church. Christ distinctly declared Peter to be the rock upon which He would build His church, and upon three different occasions did He commend to his care the lambs and sheep of his flock. Peter was the first of all the Apostles to proclaim publicly in Jerusalem, before a great assemblage of people, Jesus Christ as the Saviour of the world.

In the time of the Apostles, Rome was the capital of the world; it was the residence of the Roman emperors, whose power extended over nearly the whole of the civilized earth, and it contained within its limits more learning and wealth than could be found in any other part of the globe. It was, therefore, of the utmost importance for the propagation of Christianity, that it should gain a firm footing in the city of Rome; and the Apostles accordingly advised Peter to go there.

He arrived in Rome forty-two years after the birth of Christ, accompanied by Mark, the Evangelist. By preaching the Gospel, and working many miracles, he succeeded in establishing a large community of Christians, who faithfully adhered to the teachings of the Apostle, and it was to these converts that St. Paul addressed an epistle, which may be found in the Holy Scriptures.

After he had resided there for some time, he left for a while in order to visit other cities, and to carry the blessed light of the Gospel to those who were yet living in the darkness of unbelief. He encouraged those who had already embraced Christianity, to persevere in the practice of their holy religion and to glory in being persecuted for the sake of Christ. He underwent many hardships, and exposed himself to great dangers in his efforts to spread abroad the truths for the sake of which he was willing to sacrifice his life.

But it had been revealed to Peter that Rome would be the scene of his death, and being anxious to rejoin his well-beloved Master in His eternal kingdom, he returned to the city, the inhuman Nero at that time being emperor, St. Am-

brose says: "The heathen in Rome hated Peter, and the Christians, feeling assured that his life was in danger, besought him to leave the city so that he might be spared to them, for they had become tenderly attached to their venerable and holy teacher. St. Peter, although yearning for the martyr's crown, at once yielded to the affectionate pleadings of his children in Christ, and made his preparations to escape during the night. He had just reached one of the gates of the city, when whom should he see entering the very portal through which he intended passing, but his divine master, Jesus Christ. Peter at once said, "Lord where goest thou?" and Jesus answered, "I go to Rome to be again crucified." Peter understood the meaning of his master's words, and immediately retraced his steps, related to his astonished friends what he had seen, and soon after fell into the hands of his persecutors. During his imprisonment he succeeded in converting many of the heathens who constituted his guard, and when dragged from his dungeon to the place of execution, his only request was, that he might be crucified with his head downwards, declaring himself unworthy to suffer in the same manner as did his dear Lord. His death occurred sixty-six years after the birth of Christ, and thus the chair of the visible head of the Church has been consecrated by the crucifixion and death of St. Peter, the first Bishop of Rome, and the sovereign pontiff of all Christendom.

The Pope as the head of the Church, may be compared to the keystone of an arch, without which the whole structure would soon give way and fall to pieces. If Jesus Christ had not ordained that there should be one who should rule the Church as His representative upon earth, the Church would soon have fallen into confusion and discord; but how wonderful has been its history; powerful dynasties have crumbled into dust and not left a vestige of their existence, empires have risen and fallen, and some great change has come over every nation, so that there is not one kingdom remaining that existed in the time of the Apostles, but in the chair of Peter still sits the Vicar of Christ, the descendant of the Apostles. Other rulers have possessed extensive domains, powerful armies, and were blessed with young and vigorous heirs, but notwithstanding all this, no trace is left of their families, and their very history seems almost like a fable; while on the contrary he who has always filled the office of Vicar of Christ, has been a priest, a man without family, and one generally advanced in years, but his scepter as the ruler of the Church, has descended in an unbroken line through nineteen centuries, and is now firmly grasped by the hand of our Holy Father, Pope Pius the Ninth.

It matters little to the Church who rules in this or that kingdom, it is sufficient for every Catholic to know that they have a center around which to gather, and one which will keep united the different parts of the great body of Christ. It has been promised to the Church, built upon the rock of Peter, that the gates of hell should never prevail against her; this promise has been, and will be kept until the end of time. The precious jewels in the treasury of Christ are in the

keeping of the Church, and to the worthy she distributes with a liberal hand. But wo to those who come as beggars, and are yet full of the pride and vanity of the world, let them take heed lest they be crushed to the earth by the weight of what they have received.

The festival of to-day, in commemoration of the establishment of St. Peter's chair in Rome, should therefore be dear to the heart of every Catholic. Let us then give thanks to God for having bestowed upon us all that is needful for the salvation of our souls, and let us earnestly pray daily for the Pope, that Almighty God may inspire him with wisdom to direct the affairs of the Church committed to his care. The following prayer is frequently recited in his behalf at the divine sacrifice of the Mass.

"O God the pastor and ruler of all the faithful, mercifully regard Thy servant whom Thou hast been pleased should preside as pastor of Thy Church; grant him, we beseech Thee, to benefit by word and example, those over whom he presides; that he may arrive, together with the flock entrusted to him at eternal life.

"Through our Lord," &c.

## ST. CANUTE.

(January 19.)

"Suffering for the cause of Christ."

ABOUT eight hundred years ago, Canute King of Denmark, lost his life while attending the sacrifice of the Mass at a church in Odensee. An insurrection had broken out in his kingdom, and the king, being a very pious man, had gone as usual to Mass, when a party of the insurgents attacked the church, and endeavored to gain admittance; the king's brother and a few soldiers, however, disputed their right to enter, and for a time frustrated their plans, but a stone thrown at random passed through one of the windows of the church, and struck the king upon the forehead, causing him much pain and loss of blood.

Just at this moment, a loud knock was heard at the door of the church, and Edwin, one of the leaders of the insurrection, demanded an audience of the king, saying that he had come to propose terms of submission to the royal authority, and although urged by his brother to refuse the request, the king admitted Edwin into his presence. Having entered the sacred portal, Edwin made a profound obeisance as if to show his respect for his sovereign, but while in the act of rising, he drew from beneath the folds of his mantle a dagger which he had concealed, and rushing upon the king stabbed him to the heart.

The assassin then jumped upon the altar in order to escape through the



window placed above it, but one of the soldiers of the king attacked him with his sword and cut his body completely in two, so that one half fell outside into the hands of his friends, while the other fell back into the sanctuary. The assailants then commenced to throw stones and missiles of every description through the windows, and the king, who laid stretched before the altar, bathed in his blood, was struck by one of the flying particles and instantly killed, his brother and the little band of soldiers who had so valiantly defended their royal master, soon after sharing the same fate.

It will, perhaps, seem strange to us, that one who had always done every thing in his power to further the interests of religion, should meet with so untimely an end as did King Canute, but Almighty God had some wise purpose in permitting him to suffer as he did; for the ways of the Lord are wonderful, and not within the comprehension of mortal man.

It was customary at that time in Denmark, for the people to elect their sovereign, and they had unanimously chosen Canute, whose death we have just related, to be their king. After ascending the throne, his first care was to have the Gospel preached throughout his dominions, and the only use he made of the numerous victories he gained over the marauding bands who invaded his kingdom, was to have them taught the truths of Christianity.

He possessed the qualities, not only of a great warrior, but of a good ruler; he was distinguished for his piety, the impartial manner in which he administered justice, and for the interest he always evinced in the welfare of his subjects. The excellent example he gave made those by whom he was surrounded desirous of imitating him in the practice of virtue. His heart was filled with a sincere love for God, whose assistance he constantly implored, and he manifested his charity by endeavoring to impress upon the minds of all with whom he came in contact, the true knowledge and belief in the blessed truths of the Gospel. In consequence of the holiness of his life, he has been thought worthy of canonization, and it would be well for us to try and practice the Christian virtues which entitled him to the honor of being numbered among the Saints of the Catholic Church.

In meditating upon the life and death of Canute, we see clearly that this world is not the place where real merit meets with its reward. Many good Christians are obliged to struggle through life earning their bread in the sweat of their brow, if they relax their efforts for a time, want and poverty will be the consequence; and how often do we not see sickness and death visiting the humble abodes of the poor, but in the depth of their sorrow let them remember that "whom God loveth, He chasteneth."

It is the will of God that we should suffer in patience any affliction He sends us; by doing so we lessen the weight of our cross, and earn for ourselves in the world to come, the reward promised to those who place their trust in Him.

How often do we hear from those who profess to be Christians, the words: "What have I done to deserve this?" when, perhaps, the bitter chalice of sorrow has been pressed to their lips. In reply we will answer: "For what reason was the Son of God called upon to die the death of a malefactor?" or: "Why was it, that the Blessed Virgin stood beneath the cross, witnessing the terrible sufferings of her Divine Son?" Simply because it was the will of God. Rest assured that it is for some wise purpose that we too are appointed to carry the heavy cross borne by our dear Lord and Saviour. Look at the sufferings of the Apostles and martyrs, and of the Saints of God, and see if your trials will not sink into insignificance when compared with theirs. Make, then, the firm resolution never again to utter the complaint: "What have I done to deserve this affliction?"

Do not let your impatience, like a worm in the bud, destroy the merit of your good works; remember St. Canute and the many blessed men and women who led holy lives upon earth, who did so much that was good and endured so much that was evil, but who without doubt now praise and thank God for the afflictions and tribulations they suffered during their lives. Never murmur that your lot seems harder than your neighbor's, but reflect upon the answer that God has given to those who question His authority: "My thoughts are not as your thoughts, nor my ways as your ways, for as the heavens are exalted above the earth, so are my ways exalted above your ways, and my thoughts above your thoughts."

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## ST. SEBASTIAN.

(January 20.)

"Christian Courage."

ST. SEBASTIAN lived in the time of the Emperor Diocletian, whose hatred and persecution of Christians has been frequently mentioned in the lives of some of the early martyrs. When very young, he became one of the body guard of the emperor, and on account of his excellent behavior and soldierly qualities, he soon attained a high rank in the army. The emperor did not know that the youth whom he regarded with so much favor professed the religion he had sworn to persecute; not that Sebastian had concealed his faith, but because it would have been useless for him to incur the wrath of the emperor until questioned as to the fact of his being a Christian. In his position as captain of the guard, he found many opportunities to cheer and encourage those Christians who were imprisoned on account of their religion.

Once two brothers, Marcellus and Mark, who had been converted to the faith, were cast into prison, and then sentenced to death; Sebastian saw them daily and comforted them in their captivity. He exhorted them to despise the fleeting pleasures of the world, and to endure with courage and patience, sufferings that would entitle them to the martyr's crown. As they belonged to a noble and wealthy family, a reprieve of thirty days was granted by the emperor, in order to give their heathen relatives time to persuade, if possible, the two brothers to renounce their belief in Christ and to offer sacrifice once more to the gods. Their parents, their wives, and their numerous friends never left them for a moment; they implored the brothers not to throw away their lives, but to comply with the wishes of the emperor, who would restore to them immediately all the vast possessions they had forfeited by becoming Christians.

Besieged on every side, the desire to die for Christ was becoming weaker and weaker in the hearts of the brothers, when Sebastian, who had access at all hours to their cell, came to the rescue. He entreated them not to exchange their heavenly inheritance for the perishable goods of the earth; and he spoke with such eloquence and zeal that he not only succeeded in reviving within the breasts of the two brothers the wish to become martyrs, but he convinced their relatives and friends of the truths of Christianity. By the power of God and through the indefatigable efforts of Sebastian, many other distinguished persons were received into the fold of Christ.

It soon reached the ears of the emperor that Sebastian, upon whom he had showered so many favors, had always been a Christian. He sent for him at once, and when Sebastian came, the emperor thus addressed him: "I have conferred rank and wealth upon thee, and in return thou hast scoffed at the gods whom I worship." But Sebastian answered: "I have always prayed to the one true God in thy behalf, and for the welfare of the Roman Empire, but I will not risk the salvation of my soul by offering sacrifice to idols made of stone."

His reply enraged the emperor, who at once ordered the guards to take Sebastian forth and tie him to a tree, and then to shoot at him with their arrows, until he was dead. After they had obeyed the imperial command the archers left him, believing that they had accomplished their work; but the poor widow of another martyr went at night to bury the body of Sebastian, when to her great joy she found him still living. She procured assistance and had him conveyed to her house, where he soon recovered. The Christians, who had heard of his miraculous escape from death, now came to see him and implored him to fly, but the desire to die for Christ increased as health and strength returned. Knowing that the emperor was obliged to pass by a certain spot on his way to the temple, he placed himself where he knew that he would be seen, and as soon as Diocletian approached, he said to him: "Go not to offer sacrifice to false gods, the idolatrous priests seek only to deceive thee; they calumniate the Chris-



tians, by telling thee that it is a part of their religion to hate and despise the royal authority; but in truth, prayers are always ascending before the throne of God, imploring His blessing upon thee, and upon thy people."

The emperor, thinking that his senses deceived him, said: "Art thou not Sebastian, who suffered death?" and Sebastian replied: "It is the will of God that I should again appear before thee, and tell thee how unjustly thou art persecuting the true servants of Christ."

The emperor, now fully convinced that it was Sebastian whom he saw before him, ordered him to be taken outside of the city, and to be beaten until dead, charging the executioners not to desist from their work until satisfied that the spirit had left the body; thus did Sebastian suffer a second time for the cause of Christ.

The life and death of Sebastian were those of a true soldier of the cross; always full of faith and courage, and ever ready to sacrifice his life in the service of his Lord and Master.

Perhaps, dear reader, in reflecting upon the career of the Christian hero Sebastian you may picture to yourself a noble oak full of strength and vitality, defying the fury of the elements, and preserving unbroken its magnificent proportions. Of course it would be impossible to carry off the entire tree, but still there are many branches within your reach from which you may gather leaves. Endeavor then, if not to equal in all at least to practice some of the virtues that brought forth such beautiful fruit in the time of trial. Be fearless in the service of your Lord and King, never hesitate to rebuke those who revile your holy religion, remembering that it requires very little courage to speak in defense of your faith in the presence of Catholics, but a great deal to stand up bravely, and challenge to the combat those who have called into question the honor and glory of God. Remember that when confirmed, the Bishop made the sign of the cross upon your forehead with the holy chrism, exhorting you at the same time to be faithful soldiers of Jesus Christ. From that moment, you became one who at all times must be ready to fight manfully under the sacred banner of the Lord of Hosts; put your whole trust in Him, and He will place upon your brow the crown of victory.

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## ST. AGNES.

(January 21.)

"Innocence"

ST. SEBASTIAN having been justly compared to an oak, the Saint whose blessed memory is recalled to-day, may not the less truly be likened to the

spotless lily. Even in the early ages of the Church the Christians looked with veneration and love upon this flower in the garden of God, as the type of innocence and purity.

St. Agnes lived during the reign of the cruel Diocletian, and when very young was accused of being a Christian, by the son of the Roman governor, who had been attracted by her extreme loveliness, and whose wife she had refused to become, telling him that she had chosen Jesus Christ as the bridegroom of her soul.

She was thrown into prison, and the usual offers were made to her, if she would renounce Christianity, but if she persisted in her refusal, it was ordered that she should be burned alive. She was dragged before the altar of the idols and told to offer incense to them, her hands having been unfettered for that purpose; but the only use she made of them, was to make the sign of the cross upon her forehead, although she knew that the penalty would be death.

Seeing her courage and the impossibility of forcing her into a compliance with his wishes, the judge determined to make one last effort to win her from her allegiance to the cause of Christ. He, therefore, told her that if she persevered in remaining a Christian, he would publicly declare her to be a prostitute, and at the mercy of the soldiers who filled the city; but even this horrible threat did not produce the effect he desired, for she remained as firm and undaunted as she had been when menaced with death. But the powerful hand of God was now stretched forth to save from pollution the tender and innocent virgin whose whole hope was in Him, and as it has sometimes happened that when Christians were thrown into the cages of wild beasts, instead of rushing upon them and devouring them at once, the savage creatures would crouch down timidly in the corner, as if frightened at the sight of their defenseless prey; so it was in the case of the saintly Agnes, for when the profligates of the city came as they thought to gratify their wicked desires, a feeling of awe came over them, and they found it impossible to even raise their eyes in the pure presence of the bride of Christ.

Although miraculously preserved from a fate worse than death, the heathen were determined that she should suffer for the faith she had embraced, and she was accordingly sentenced to be beheaded. The crowd who had assembled to witness the execution and the executioner himself, were moved to tears at the sight of the youthful and lovely virgin, who with a smile of joy upon her face, laid her beautiful head upon the block and received the stroke that placed upon her brow the martyr's crown.

After her death her parents saw her in a vision, clothed in bright garments and accompanied by a spotless lamb. She told them not to mourn for her, that she was now with Him whom she had loved while upon earth.

In the earliest days of the Church, St. Agnes was looked upon with love and veneration. The most distinguished Fathers of the Church, St. Ambrose,

St. Jerome, and St. Austine, speak of her in their writings as the type of innocence and purity.

And can we imagine any thing more worthy of admiration, than to see one in the bloom of youth, willingly sacrificing her life for the sake of her beloved Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ?

Let us venerate also, dear reader, this bright and beautiful star in the galaxy of the blessed saints of God, let us endeavor to imitate her in her purity and strength of character, for remember what our dear Lord says: "Blessed are the *clean of heart*, for they shall see God."

Let us then try to obtain and preserve as a sacred treasure, a pure heart. This we can do by frequenting the tribunal of penance, and by placing upon our lips the guard of prudence, and before our eyes the veil of modesty.

## ST. BLASILLA.

(January 22.)

"Making good use of affliction."

ST. BLASILLA was the daughter of very pious parents, who resided in the city of Rome, and was left a widow when very young, her husband dying in the first year of their marriage. After his death she became dangerously ill, and the vanity and emptiness of the world made such an impression upon her soul, that she resolved if she ever recovered, to devote the remainder of her life to the service of God.

In the sacred Scriptures we are told that when the mother-in-law of St. Peter lay sick of a fever, the Saviour came to see her, and after placing His sacred hand upon her forehead, the fever left her and she rose from her bed and served Him. So it was with Blasilla, for as soon as her health and strength returned, she carried out to their fullest extent the holy resolutions she had made upon her sick bed, and from that time lived only for God.

Instead of silk and velvet, she now wore a dress made of the coarsest materials, and in place of her former ornaments of gold and precious stones, she now covered her head with a simple veil. Her magnificent wardrobe and jewels she disposed of for the benefit of the poor, and the time she had usually spent in gazing upon her beauty, she now devoted to the contemplation of heavenly things; so that her soul became rich in the knowledge and love of her Lord and Master Jesus Christ.

Although weak and exhausted from her long sickness, the dawn of day and the midnight hour, found her upon her knees in prayer, strengthening her mind with the spiritual nourishment of the Gospel. She grew daily in holiness, and



never wearied for a moment in the practice of the duties of her holy religion.

Almighty God never sends afflictions unless for our good, and we can always turn them to our benefit if we are so disposed. We read in the Gospel of St. Luke 13: 6-9, the following parable: "A certain man had a fig-tree planted in his vineyard, and he came seeking fruit on it, and found none. And he said to the dresser of the vine-yard: Behold for these three years I come seeking fruit on this fig-tree, and I find none. Cut it down therefore; why cumbereth it the ground? But he answering said to him: Lord, let it alone this year also, until I dig about it and dung it. And if happily it bear fruit: but if not, then after that thou shalt cut it down."

The early life of Blasilla was like that of the barren fig-tree. Until stretched upon the bed of sickness, her only desire had been to live for the world, but now that the hand of God had loosened the hardened soil around her heart, it commenced to bear fruits full of sweetness and piety.

And now, dear reader, let us reflect for a moment upon the gratitude we owe to God for not "cutting us down," when perhaps in our whole lives we have not brought forth a single fruit worthy of His acceptance. Think of His mercy and loving kindness in permitting us to "cumber the ground" year after year, waiting patiently for the time to come when our hearts will be softened, if not by gratitude, by the afflictions He has been pleased to visit upon us, in order to rouse us from the lethargy into which we were sinking. When weak and ill, we may perhaps have made excellent resolutions to live only for God, if he would increase the number of our days; but how quickly did we forget them when restored to health, and again would we become like the unfruitful tree. Let us endeavor to imitate Blasilla in keeping the promises we have made to God, for we know not the hour when we may be called upon to "render an account of the deeds done in the body."

After spending a few years in the constant practice of good works, Blasilla again fell ill, and it was God's will that she should never rise from her bed of pain; her pious mother St. Paula was still living when this heavy burden of sorrow was laid upon her maternal heart.

St. Jerome, who knew the family intimately, having heard of the death of Blasilla, wrote a letter to St. Paula, which may yet be found in the writings of this great Father of the Church. He consoles her for the loss of her daughter, and reproaches her relatives for the immoderate grief they had displayed. He says: "If Blasilla had been cut down in the spring-time of life, when her heart was full of the world and its pleasures, then indeed would you have reason to mourn. But when purified by affliction, as by a second baptism, she renounced all for Christ, then should your sadness be turned into joy, for she has only gone to receive her reward. Beware, Paula, of offending God by murmuring at His dispensations. He asks you, 'Are you sad because your child has become

mine? Remember how willing Abraham was to sacrifice his only son, and you, who have children left, give way to sorrow because your daughter now wears a crown in heaven. Listen to the words she now addresses to you, and then be comforted. 'If you love me, covet not my happiness. I am now enjoying the company of the Saints, and would you have me return to earth? Oh! how bright and beautiful are the things I now see, and how sweet the sounds that fall upon my ear. Let me remain where I am, and seek only to share with me at some future time, the eternal joys of the kingdom of heaven.'

## JOHN THE ALMONER.

(January 23.)

"Forgiveness"

ST. JOHN was Bishop of Alexandria, and from the willingness he exhibited in giving all that he had to the poor, received the name of "the Almoner." As the speculator schemes day and night in order to make great profits, so did St. John, by every means in his power, endeavor to accomplish his charitable designs in behalf of the poor.

St. Paul says, "If I should distribute all my goods to feed the poor, and if I should deliver my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing." That is to say, all the alms, prayers, and fasting in the world avail us nothing, if we cherish feelings of hatred toward our fellow man. A beautiful incident in the life of St. John, shows how full he was of true charity, not only towards the poor, but towards those with whom he had just cause to be offended.

For some breach of discipline, he had been obliged to suspend a priest belonging to his diocese, but instead of doing penance for the sin he had committed, the priest abused and slandered the Bishop upon every occasion. The holy prelate's heart was oppressed with sorrow, not on his own account, but because he felt that the poor man was only endangering his own salvation by saying what he knew to be false.

The following Sunday the Bishop had just ascended the steps of the altar to offer up the divine sacrifice of the Mass, when the words of our Lord presented themselves to his mind: "If thou offer thy gift at the altar, and there thou remember that thy brother hath any thing against thee, leave there thy offering before the altar, and go first to be reconciled to thy brother, and then coming thou shalt offer thy gift." He at once descended the steps and sent for the priest whom he had suspended. When he entered his presence the Bishop fell upon his knees, and said, "Brother forgive me." The priest was so overcome by this beautiful example of Christian charity in his superior, that he too fell upon

his knees, humbly asking the Bishop's pardon and forbearance. "May God forgive us both," said the Saint, and being reconciled they returned into the church, where the Bishop having fulfilled the command of God, could now with a heart at rest, say the words, "Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us."

On another occasion, St. John and Nicetas, the governor of Alexandria, disagreed upon some matter relating to the poor of the city, and they separated in anger, but when he reached his home the Bishop suddenly remembered the words, "Let not the sun go down upon thy wrath," and he immediately sent two of his clergymen to the governor with the message that the sun would soon set, and the governor understanding his meaning, went at once to his house and humbly asked his forgiveness. In a short time things were settled to the satisfaction of both, and they were ever afterwards good friends.

St. John had a favorite nephew by the name of George, who had been grossly insulted by a man belonging to the lower classes. He felt it the more because he conceived that the honor of his uncle had been attacked; but when he mentioned the affair to the Bishop, the holy priest said, "I shall take such vengeance upon the man, that the city will ring with it." The youth of course imagined that the Bishop would have the offender punished in the public square—for in those days the Bishops possessed great power, but kissing his nephew upon the forehead, the Bishop said, "Prove that you are related to me not only by the ties of blood, but by the sweet bond of charity, and learn to forgive those who have done you wrong." The only vengeance that he took, was to remit a debt which the man owed him, showing thereby his perfect willingness to "forgive those who had trespassed against him."

If any person came to him to speak ill of his neighbor, the Bishop would endeavor to change the conversation, but if the other persisted in recurring to the subject, the holy man would then remain perfectly silent, and would afterward give orders to his servants to refuse admittance to the person, if he ever came again.

At that time slaves were completely at the mercy of their masters, but if an instance of cruelty reached the ears of the Bishop, he would at once send for the master and remonstrate with him for what he had done. Upon one occasion he said to a certain master, "My son, remember that your slave is as dear to the heart of God as you are; it was for him as well as for you that the Saviour died. By ill treating him, you injure the work of God's hands, for like yourself, he is made in the image of the Creator. How would it be with you if Almighty God punished you every time that you offended him? Therefore be merciful if you expect mercy."

The strict adherence of the charitable Bishop to the admonition, "From him that would borrow of thee turn not away," was well known throughout the city. An impostor once applied to him for the loan of a large sum of money,



and after having obtained it denied the fact, saying that he had never received any money from the Bishop. St. John was advised by some friends to have the man punished, as the money might otherwise have been given to the poor, but the Saint only said: "Be merciful, as your father is merciful, who maketh His sun to rise upon the good and bad, and raineth upon the just and the unjust." Luke, 6: 36.

There lived in the city of Alexandria a distinguished judge, whose heart was filled with hatred against a certain person; the Saint used every means in his power to reconcile the two, but in vain. He therefore determined to make one last effort, and having sent for the judge invited him to go with him into his private chapel, as he was just about to celebrate Mass. It was customary at that time to say aloud with the priest the Lord's Prayer. When they came to the words, "forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us," the Bishop and his assistant paused, and the judge was obliged to say it alone. Immediately after the Mass, the holy Bishop turned to the judge and said to him: "Did you reflect upon the words you uttered at that solemn moment? to be forgiven as you forgive,"—the judge was so overcome by the application of the words to himself, that he fell upon his knees, exclaiming: "My Lord, do with me as you will," and was at once reconciled to his former enemy.

It would be impossible for us in a few pages to record the many beautiful instances of true charity in the life of St. John. What we have related concerning him, is sufficient to show how earnest he was in laboring not only for his own salvation, but for that of others. Would it not be well for us, dear reader, to exhibit in our lives the same spirit of charity and forgiveness. If we cherish feelings of anger or hatred against our neighbor, let us not "offer our gifts at the altar" until we have extended to him the hand of friendship, and at the hour of death what a consolation it will be for us to remember, that we forgave as we hope to be forgiven.

Do not let the unchristian thought that we have not been to blame, deter us from making the first advances. Remember what our dear Lord says: "Blessed are the peace-makers; for they shall be called the children of God."

Let us be careful not to listen to things said in disparagement of our neighbor, turn a deaf ear to any one who repeats a slander, and like St. John, cover with the mantle of charity the failings of the weak.

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## ST. TIMOTHY.

(January 24.)

"Sobriety."

ST. TIMOTHY was the beloved and faithful disciple of the Apostle Paul, who addressed two epistles to him, which are still preserved in the sacred Scriptures. He was the Bishop of Ephesus, in which city he died the death of a martyr. Instead of giving a detailed account of the life of St. Timothy, we will give an extract from a sermon preached by St. Chrysostom, who took for his text the twenty-third verse of the fifth chapter of the first Epistle of St. Paul to Timothy. "Do not still drink water, but use a little wine for thy stomach's sake, and thy frequent infirmities."

"Timothy despised the pleasures of the table to such a degree, that he became ill in consequence of his abstemiousness, and although he had reached the height of perfection, for fear of losing it he continued to live a life of self-denial. The greater the favors he received from heaven, the more humble did he become. In this he imitated St. Paul, who after having been transported into the third heaven, and having listened to things never heard before by mortal man, and who traversed the world as if borne on wings, says in his epistle to the Corinthians, 'I chastise my body and bring it into subjection, lest perhaps when I have preached to others, I myself should become a cast-away.'

"The advice given by St. Paul to Timothy, may by some be thought to contain a permission to indulge freely in the use of wine, but if examined, it will be seen that St. Paul says distinctly, 'use a little wine,' not that Timothy stood in need of the admonition, but that future generations should understand that wine, if used in moderation, is beneficial, while on the contrary there is no end to the miseries that follow in the train of the drunkard. By the immoderate use of wine, unruly passions are stirred up within us, and the strongest will find themselves becoming weak. Wine should only be taken to bring back vigor to the body, and not to destroy the powers of the mind. Intemperance is a vice that closes heaven and opens hell, let us therefore, dear children, listen to the advice given by the Apostle St. Paul, and use but 'little wine.'"

Timothy had not only been chosen Bishop, but like the Apostles, he had the gift of working miracles bestowed upon him. In his life-time he made many long and difficult journeys for the sake of spreading the Gospel, and he crowned his labors upon earth by dying for the faith he professed. Nevertheless this man so full of merit, a pupil of the Apostles, and one so truly imbued with the spirit of Christ, thought it necessary to live in so frugal a manner, that St. Paul was obliged to counsel him to 'use a little wine for the sake of his stomach and his frequent infirmities.'

"How terrible it is to see those who do not pretend to control their appetites in this respect, and bring ruin not only upon themselves, but upon their families,

who entail upon their posterity the curse of a broken constitution, who squander their property, and by their misconduct bring into their families the demon of discord, until they become a by-word and scorn, not only to their children but to all around them.

In conclusion we beg of you, dear Christians, to meditate upon the warning contained in another Epistle written by St. Paul, in *His* first Epistle to the Corinthians, in which he says: "Neither fornicators, nor idolators, nor adulterers, nor the effeminate, nor liars with mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor railers, nor extortioners shall possess the kingdom of God."

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## BLESSED HENRY SUSO.

(January 25.)

"Trust in God."

HENRY SUSO belonged to the order of Dominican Friars, and in reading his life we are forcibly reminded of the words addressed by St. Paul to the Hebrews, that "he whom the Lord loveth He chastiseth."

He lived 'about five hundred years ago, and spent the greater part of his life in the city of Constance. There is yet in existence a work entitled, "Life of Henry Suso, called Amandus," and from it we will make a few extracts for the edification of the faithful.

"He was once transported in the company of many angels to a city, and the angel nearest to him said, 'stretch forth thy hand, and see what will be placed in it,' and doing as he was bid, he found himself holding a beautiful red rose surrounded by fresh green-leaves. The flower was so large that it covered his entire hand, but so light withal, that he hardly seemed to feel its weight. Filled with astonishment, Henry turned to one of the angelic host, and said, 'What does this red rose signify?' and the angel answered, 'It is an emblem of suffering and affliction.' The answer consoled him very much, and full of compassion for those who murmur at the slightest trouble, he said, 'Oh! how wonderful it is, that what seems like a burden to man, is in reality so light to bear.'

"Once, when traveling through the Netherlands, two noblemen who had been his companions, accused him of being a heretic, and caused him to be summoned before a tribunal, and he was accordingly thrown into prison, and treated in the harshest manner. He was sitting alone in his cell one evening, feeling very weak and disconsolate, and while meditating upon all of the misfortunes that had befallen him, he exclaimed: 'My troubles have overwhelmed me, O God, and there is no peace for me while upon earth,' when suddenly his chamber



seemed to be filled with an array of heavenly beings, all of them singing hymns of joy. One of them said to him, 'Why art thou silent, sing with us;' but in the sadness of his heart he answered: 'Can'st thou not see that I am oppressed with sorrow, there is no joy within me; I am only waiting for the hand of death to close my eyes, that have never seen any thing but suffering.' 'Thou shalt yet sing a hymn of joy and thanksgiving to God,' said the angel, 'therefore be comforted.' Henry hearing these words so full of consolation, burst into tears and soon recovered his usual cheerfulness.

"Once while passing through a certain city on business for his order, he was accused of having poisoned all of the wells in the city, and the populace in their wrath resolved to put him to death, and were on the point of throwing him into the Rhine, when a huge peasant who had seized him by the arm exclaimed, 'Let me with my spear nail this poisoner to the wall as a warning to others.' Thinking that his hour had come, Henry fell upon his knees, and raising his eyes to heaven uttered the following prayer: 'Hasten to my assistance, thou God of the poor and forsaken, I am in great need of help. O heart full of mercy, have pity upon me, for I am surrounded by those who desire my death.' And a priest who was just passing by having heard the mournful appeal, exerted himself so successfully in his behalf that he was enabled to escape from the city."

The few extracts we have given from the life of Henry Suso are sufficient to show that God "tempers the wind to the shorn lamb." When Henry thought himself forsaken by God and man, angels came to console him; and although we may not be thought worthy of receiving the same honor, we have it in our power to make known to God all our wants, and rest assured that He will not turn a deaf ear to our petition, for like ourselves, "He was a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief."

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## ST. POLYCARP.

(January 26.)

"Living and dying for the Faith."

In the beginning of the Christian era, those who embraced the true faith were distinguished for the holiness of their lives, and obeyed the precepts of the Church so strictly, that those who would have been deemed lukewarm in the primitive days of faith, would now be regarded by us as Saints. The great Apostle St. Peter, in several of his Epistles addressed to the Christians of that time, calls them, "THE COMMUNITIES OF SAINTS."

But even among these holy people there lived one who excelled those by

whom he was surrounded in the practice of the Christian virtues, to the same extent as St. Peter's surpasses in grandeur and beauty all other churches. He of whom we speak was St. Polycarp, a pupil of the Apostle St. John, and appointed by him Bishop of Smyrna. He was treated with the greatest veneration in his lifetime, and so great was the love borne him by the people that they would dispute with one another for the honor of untying his sandals, in order that they might be enabled to touch any thing belonging to one whom they looked upon as a Saint. His reputation for sanctity was so well established, that St. John, when commanded by our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ to write to the seven Bishops of the Church in Asia, addresses Polycarp thus: "And to the angel of the Church of Smyrna write: these things saith the first and last, who was dead and is alive: I know thy tribulation and thy poverty, but thou art rich: and thou art blasphemed by them that say they are Jews and are not, but are the synagogue of Satan. Fear none of these things which thou shalt suffer. Behold, the devil will cast some of you into prison that you may be tried: and you shall have tribulation ten days. Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee the crown of life. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith to the Churches: He that shall overcome, shall not be hurt by the second death."

What had been prophesied regarding St. Polycarp came to pass, for when far advanced in years, he was accused by the Gentiles of having been the cause of so many forsaking the worship of the gods. They were resolved to put him to death, and in order to escape their fury, he concealed himself in a villa near the city, where he remained for three days in constant prayer. His persecutors made every effort to find him, and when at last they discovered his retreat, instead of being cast down, the Saint only said, "God's will be done." He then appeared before the soldiers, spoke kindly to them, and ordered his attendants to place meat and wine before them. He then asked permission to continue his devotions, and placing himself upon his knees he prayed fervently for the flock committed to his care, for the Church, and for all who sought to do her evil. Many of the soldiers who were listening to him, were so touched by the beautiful spirit of charity that animated the noble old man, that they openly regretted having any thing to do with his punishment. He was brought before the Roman governor, who said to him, "Blaspheme Christ, and I will give thee thy freedom;" but the Saint answered: "For eighty-six years have I served Him who has redeemed me, and who is my King, why then should I blaspheme Him who has never harmed me?" "Then," said the Governor, "thou shalt be burned alive." But Polycarp, unmoved by his threats replied: "I am not afraid of a fire that will burn but for an hour, and will then be extinguished; I fear only the eternal flames of hell, prepared for those who renounce their faith in Christ. Delay not my punishment, therefore, for death has no terrors for me." He was accordingly sentenced to be burned alive. The funeral pile was prepared,

and having bound his hands, the Saint was placed upon it. Raising his eyes to heaven he said: "O Almighty God, Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, thou God of angels, of creation, and of the righteous, I thank Thee for having preserved my life until this day, for permitting me to be numbered among the martyrs of the Church, and for the honor of drinking from the chalice of affliction. Receive me this day into Thy presence as a pleasing sacrifice, and let me with the Saints sing Thy praises for ever and ever."

The lighted torch was applied to the fagots, but behold, in the midst of the flames Polycarp stood untouched, his body shining like gold, and diffusing a sweet odor like incense.

Enraged at what he saw, the governor then ordered a soldier to pierce the side of the Saint with a sword, and the blood flowed so profusely that it extinguished the flames.

Like his teacher the Apostle St. John, Polycarp wrote several epistles addressed to different communities of Christians, and from the one directed to the Christians of Philippi we will give a short extract, in order that you too, dear reader, may profit by the teachings of this great Saint and martyr:

"Serve God in fear and truth, flee from the empty words and seductions of the world, and believe only in Him who rose from the dead and sitteth now at the right hand of God the Father. And He will raise us also at the last day if we obey His commands, if we love what He has loved, if we abstain from doing wrong, and from all manner of deception, if we refrain from being covetous, from speaking ill of our neighbor or from bearing false testimony, if we return good for evil and bless those who curse us. Remember what the Lord says, 'Judge not, that ye be not judged; forgive, and it shall be forgiven unto you; condemn not, and ye shall not be condemned, for with the same measure that you shall mete out, shall it be measured unto you. Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness sake, for their's is the kingdom of God.' Be therefore firm in your faith, and follow the example given by our dear Lord; be steadfast and waver not. Let charity abound in you, and despise no one; be always ready to assist the poor, for 'charity delivereth from death.' Pray for your rulers and for your Bishops, and for those who persecute and hate you, and for all the enemies of your holy religion. Do this and ye will become perfect in Christ."

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## ST. JOHN CHRYSOSTOM.

(January 27.)

*"Glory be to God in all things."*

ST. CHRYSOSTOM was one of the servants to whom Almighty God gave five talents, with which to gain five more. He occupied a position in the Church second only to that of the Pope, and on account of his wonderful eloquence was called "Chrysostom," or the "Golden mouth." He received an excellent education, and as the forum was at that time the great avenue to promotion, he commenced practicing as an advocate; but he soon became disgusted with the profession, and his disinclination for worldly pursuits excited in his mind an increasing desire for a life of retirement. He therefore resolved to enter a convent in the vicinity of his birth-place, Antioch, and having done so, he for a long time gave himself up to a life of prayer and study. But it was not the will of God that so great a light should be hid from the people, and having gone on a visit to Antioch, in order to recover his health, the holy Bishop of that city took him under his especial care, and had the sagacity to foresee the eminent services which his talents would one day render to the Church. He was soon after ordained priest, and appointed to fill the office of preacher to the thousands of Catholics who dwelt in the city. His words had the same effect upon the soul that pure wine has upon the body, they infused health and vigor into those Christians who were desirous of attaining perfection, and gave them the strength to strive after it. He would often preach twice a day, for his mind was like an inexhaustible fountain, and his sermons had such an effect upon the people that they would frequently give way to bursts of applause; but instead of feeling honored at such marks of approbation, he would tell them that it would be more consoling to his heart if they would show by their amended lives that they had profited by what they had heard.

He was greatly scandalized that so many left the church after hearing the sermon, instead of waiting until the divine mysteries had been celebrated; he told them that by doing so, they paid more honor to the servant than to the master. For twelve years he preached in Antioch to immense crowds, and God alone knows how many souls were converted to the true faith by listening to the words that fell like diamonds from his lips, so precious were they to those who gathered them up and treasured them in their hearts. His fame as an orator spread through the land, and Antioch rejoiced at having given birth to so eloquent a man; but full of humility, Chrysostom only thanked God for making use of him as an humble laborer in His vineyard, the only desire of his life being to extend the kingdom of God upon earth.

A Christian emperor lived at that time in Constantinople, where now the Sultan reigns, and the See next in rank to that of Rome, was that of Constan-

tinople, to which dignity the emperor was desirous of elevating Chrysostom. Fearing, however, that the people of Antioch would refuse to part with their beloved pastor, the emperor resorted to a trick in order to attain his object,—he sent a confidential friend to request Chrysostom to confer with him at an appointed spot. The Saint went to the place of meeting, was taken into the messenger's chariot, and hurried off to Constantinople. Thus did he find himself entrapped into the episcopal dignity, but with renewed zeal did he continue to work for the salvation of the souls committed to his care. He sent missionaries to every part of his diocese in order to convert the heathens, and to win back to the faith those Christians who had turned to the worship of false gods.

But let us now see how St. Chrysostom conducted himself when misfortunes befel him. The boldness and force with which he declaimed against the fashionable vices of the luxurious capital, not sparing even the female part of it, drew down upon him a host of enemies. The empress Eudoxia was a very wicked woman, and had her husband completely under her control. Chrysostom having heard that she had taken from a widow all that she possessed, wrote her a letter, reproving her for what she had done. The empress became very much enraged, and endeavored to incite the emperor against him. Upon another occasion he preached a sermon in which he reproved the women for their extravagance in dress, and the empress, fancying that his remarks were addressed to her in particular, caused him to be arrested and brought before a council of priests who were unfriendly to him. Many grave charges were brought against him; it was alleged that he had censured some of the priests, that he was inhospitable, that he gave no account of the church revenues, and that he only said his prayers in public. It was furthermore declared that in one of his sermons he had compared the empress to Jezebel, and although the priests did not possess the right of deposing their Bishops, they nevertheless deprived him of his office, and inflicted other punishments upon him by order of the emperor. But the people hearing of the proceedings, assembled in crowds around the church and house of their beloved Bishop, in order to protect him against his enemies. Blood would have been shed if the soldiers had made any effort to seize him, for the people were determined to resist any one who would attempt to separate them from their faithful shepherd; but Chrysostom was carried off during the night and taken before the council, by whom he was sentenced to be exiled. The people hearing of it, became so excited that an insurrection was feared, and an earthquake happening that very week, alarmed the empress so much, that she persuaded the emperor to revoke the sentence of exile, and wrote a letter herself to the Saint, deploring what had happened. Chrysostom immediately returned, to the great joy of the Christians, the Jews even rejoicing upon the occasion. The Black Sea was covered with small boats which were filled with people who were too impatient to wait until he landed, and as soon

as he arrived in the city, he was carried to the church of the Holy Apostles, where he was placed upon his episcopal throne. As soon as order was restored he addressed the immense multitude. He commenced by saying: "Praise be to God," these words I uttered before leaving for my place of exile, I continued to say them after I left you, and now that I am once more with you all, again do I repeat them, may the name of the Lord be praised, now and for ever. If He blesses you with health and prosperity, do not forget to praise His holy name, but if it is His will that you should suffer all manner of misfortune, praise Him nevertheless, for 'He doeth all things well.' His name be blessed both when He sends the tempest, and when the calm succeeds it."

The peace which the Saint enjoyed, however, was of short duration, for scarcely had two months elapsed, when one of his enemies told the empress that in his sermons he had compared her to Herodias, and many other false charges were made against him, so that for the second time he was sent into exile. The soldiers compelled him to walk over the rough road, although he was then far advanced in years, at the same time he was suffering from a violent attack of fever; but his only food was dry bread and water hardly fit to drink. Many persons who met him while upon his sad journey, would stop and weep over him, but were not allowed to render him any assistance. At length he reached his place of destination, it was in a part of the empire where the cold was very severe, and the heat intense; but even in this miserable spot did he serve God, for it was while in exile that he wrote two of his most famous works.

He soon accustomed himself to the rigors of the climate, and would spend the greater part of his time in writing to the Christians of his diocese, and the heroism with which he endured his sufferings commanded the respect of the entire Christian world. His enemies in Constantinople did not rest, however, until they persuaded the emperor to banish him to a place upon the extreme limits of his vast empire. Two soldiers were sent to conduct him to his new abode, this second journey lasted three months, though it was made at such long daily stages as completely exhausted the strength of the venerable Bishop. One of the soldiers would have shown compassion to his increasing weakness, but was prevented by the brutality of his companion, who forced the illustrious sufferer to proceed by night as well as by day, exposing his venerable uncovered head to be drenched by rain and scorched by the sun. Happily for himself his release was nearer than his tormentors had expected. On the fourteenth of September, 407, in the sixty-third year of his age, after a night of increased indisposition at Comanus, a little village in Pontus, he requested a short time to recover himself before he proceeded on his way. He was refused, and hurried along with greater violence than before; but when they had proceeded a mile or two, perceiving that he was in a dying condition, they brought him back to an oratory dedicated to the martyr St. Basilicus. He there changed all his clothes, to his very shoes, putting on his best attire, which was all white, as if he meant



it for his heavenly nuptials. He was yet fasting, and having received the holy viaticum from the priest of the oratory, he poured forth his last prayer, closing it with his usual doxology, "Glory be to God in all things." Having faintly uttered the Amen, and signed himself with the seal of salvation, he sweetly surrendered his soul into the hands of his Maker.

Let us resolve, dear reader, to imitate St. Chrysostom in giving praise to God at all times and in all places.

## ST. MARGARET.

(January 28.)

"Voluntary Suffering."

ST. MARGARET was the daughter, of a powerful king of Hungary, who entered a convent when very young, and there led a life of extraordinary sanctity. From motives of humility she desired the sisters never to address her by her title of royal highness, and she would always beg her august parents never to visit her in state. She was once heard to say: "If it had pleased Almighty God to make me the daughter of a peasant, my happiness would have been complete."

Her clothes were made of the coarsest materials, inferior even to those of the other nuns, the fine habits sent to her by her parents she would give to the poor. She wore a girdle made of rough hair next to her body, and had her shoes made so that the ends of the nails would pierce her feet. She would patiently endure violent pains, rather than murmur or be the cause of trouble in the convent, and every year from Holy Thursday until Easter, she spent in prayer and meditation, making frequent use of the discipline.

Her humility was so great that of her own free will she would perform the most menial offices; she swept the church, the cells of the nuns, the refectory, and the kitchen, so that her hands became rough like those of any common servant, and in winter her fingers would sometimes freeze.

Her zeal in attending upon the sick was also very great; she carried them their meals, made their beds, and arranged every thing in order about their rooms; helped them to rise, and would then assist them back again to bed. Those who were too feeble to walk she would carry into the chapel, if they expressed a wish to hear Mass, and would attend to their every want, even bringing them their wood and water. Nothing could deter her from rendering her services, even to lepers and to those who were suffering from other loathsome diseases.

She was very scrupulous in executing the commands of her Superior, there-

by inciting others to imitate her example. Upon one occasion all of the nuns had violated the precept of fasting, with the exception of Margaret, and as a punishment they were told to eat their dinner, consisting of bread and water, while seated upon the floor; but Margaret, in her desire to suffer, begged permission to share in their humiliation, although perfectly innocent.

Three powerful princes asked her hand in marriage; the king of Bohemia, the king of Sicily, and the duke of Poland; but she refused each one in succession, although told that the Pope had power to absolve her from her vow of chastity; but she declared that she would cut off her nose or lips, rather than be faithless to Him whom she had chosen as her Bridegroom.

A life of such voluntary suffering as that led by Margaret seems almost impossible to us; but the ways of the Lord are inscrutable, and we are sometimes compelled to carry the cross that Margaret out of pure love for her divine Saviour chose to bear upon her feeble shoulders.

Perhaps, dear reader, it is the will of God that your path be strewn with thorns, but learn to bear patiently whatever trial He sends you, and your merit will be increased an hundred fold; your reward will be as great as that of Margaret, who took upon herself the yoke of suffering and hardship.

Imitate the example of the royal Margaret, and disdain to be valued only for your position in the world, or on account of your wealth. Never let the thought enter your head that you are not well enough dressed to go to church, remember that Almighty God looks only at the heart; if that is adorned with the precious jewels of faith, hope, and charity, then indeed are you rich in the sight of your heavenly Father. "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for their's is the kingdom of heaven."

Many of you are obliged to abstain from food because you are poor, but Margaret, the daughter of a king, reared in affluence, fasted from day to day in order to be more like Him who fasted for forty days in the desert, nevertheless your merit will be as great as her's if you sanctify your sufferings by bearing them in patience, and you will be abundantly rewarded at the marriage-feast in heaven.

St. Margaret may serve to you as a model in many other respects, for instance: if you feel sick, do not worry yourself or others by useless complaints and by giving way to bursts of passion if every thing is not ready for you at the moment. Learn to control your temper, even if ill, and treat with kindness those who minister to your wants. Endeavor to lead a holy and virtuous life, and although your days upon earth may be destitute of every comfort, in the world to come they shall be full of sweetness and delight, and with the saintly Margaret you shall "enter into the joy of the Lord."

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## ST. FRANCIS OF SALES.

(January 29.)

*"Consolation for the faint-hearted,"*

ST. FRANCIS was the son of very pious and wealthy parents. His mother was frequently heard to say that she would rather see her child dead than have him fall into mortal sin, and it pleased Almighty God to hear her prayer, for surrounded by temptations, Francis led a holy and innocent life, became a Bishop, converted thousands who had fallen away from the Church, and wrote many admirable works for the edification of the faithful, and one in particular, "*Philothea*," a book which every Catholic should possess. He was distinguished for his extraordinary affability and for the meekness of his disposition, and after a well spent life died in the Lord, A.D. 1622.

When young, and studying in Paris, he became impressed with the idea that he would be eternally lost, the spirit of devotion left him, and melancholy and despair took possession of his heart. He wept day and night, was restless in his sleep, and ate little or nothing, so that he became exceedingly thin. Very much depressed in heart and mind, he one day entered a church in a remote part of the city, and one which he was accustomed to visit, kneeling before a statue of the Blessed Virgin he implored the Mother of mercy to obtain from her divine Son the grace to love Him fervently in this life, for as he was doomed to suffer in the next world the punishments of hell, it would be impossible for him then to love God.

He had scarcely uttered the words of his petition, when his soul became filled with courage and consolation, and he felt like one made whole again. He returned home with a cheerful heart, and from having himself experienced the terrible sufferings of despair, henceforth became the consoler and counsellor of those who imagined that their sins were greater than the mercy of God.

He once heard of a poor man who was condemned to death, but who refused to make his confession, declaring that his sins were so numerous that God would not forgive them. St. Francis went to see him, and after conversing for a while, the man said that he belonged to the devil and that he would be sent to hell after death. "But would you not rather belong to Christ, and dwell in heaven?" asked the Saint, "Certainly," replied the criminal, "but God will have nothing to do with so wretched a sinner as I am." St. Francis then fell upon his knees and said: "Look down in mercy upon us, O Lord, and remember Thy promises made from the beginning of the world. Let not the faint ray of hope be darkened in the soul of this poor man; bend not the bruised reed to the earth. Thou wilt not the death of a sinner, but rather that he be converted and live. Out of the depths of Thy mercy then give to the last moments of this unhappy sinner peace and consolation, and a sincere contrition for his



sins ;" turning to the condemned man, he asked : " Is it not your desire to belong to God, rather than to the devil ?" " Yes," replied the man, " but God will have nothing to do with so great a wretch as I." " But," the Saint said, " it was for such as you that the eternal Father sent His only begotten Son into the world, for our Saviour came to save sinners, and not the just." " But would it not be presumptuous in me to hope for mercy ?" said the criminal. " It would be presumption in you to think that your sins exceeded the mercy of God," answered the Saint. " His mercy is above His justice, and He never refuses to listen to the prayer of the truly penitent."

Holy hope began to dawn in the soul of the poor man, and perceiving it, Francis encouraged him to put his whole trust in God, saying : " Your heavenly Father will surely forgive you if you only call upon Him, for He is merciful and has promised His grace to all who ask it of Him with an humble and sorrowful heart." " God grant that I may be saved," replied the condemned, and after making a good confession, he died fully reconciled to God, his last words being : " I place myself in Thy hands, O my Jesus."

One of his penitents, having made a general confession to him, exhibited such sincere sorrow for having offended Almighty God, that the Saint expressed his delight in witnessing his contrition : but the penitent said : " You only say this, father, to console me, but your heart must be filled with detestation for so great a sinner !" " You are absolved from your sins," replied St. Francis, " and I should be worse than a Pharisee if I despised you ; to me you are as pure as the newly-fallen snow, and as thoroughly cleansed as was Naaman in the river Jordan. I thank God for the love and confidence you have placed in me, and for having changed you from a vessel of disgrace into a vessel of honor. I should be destitute of feeling if I did not rejoice with the angels in heaven at your conversion."

St. Francis says : " He who fills his soul with visions of eternal punishments instead of meditating upon the loving kindness of God, is like a person who gathers the thorns and leaves the rose untouched. The Lord is full of mercy and forgiveness, and those who put their trust in Him will never be confounded."

From the above extract, dear reader, we must be careful to avoid drawing the conclusion that Almighty God is not to be feared. Remember what the Holy Scriptures say : " The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom." But the meaning that the Saint intends to convey is, that none should think that their sins are greater than God's mercy, or that they are predestined to be damned. It is the devil who tempts you to indulge in such thoughts, he it is who fills your soul with despair and causes you to doubt of the mercy of God. St. Francis was the means of dispelling the gloom of many a poor sinner's heart, and of reconciling him to God by showing the wonderful love that the heavenly Father has for His children. Pray then to St. Francis, when dark shadows lie

heavily upon your soul, and be assured that he will offer up your prayer at the throne of mercy, and obtain for you that "peace which the world can not give."

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## ST. ANDREW OF CORSINI.

(January 30.)

"Health of the sick"

ST. ANDREW lived in Italy, and was canonized about two hundred years ago. A complete history of his life has been written, but rather than enter into minute details, we will relate for your edification two miracles worked by him.

He belonged to a very strict religious order, but was allowed to visit his relatives occasionally. It so happened that one of his cousins was afflicted with a most painful disease, and in order to distract his thoughts from his sufferings, he would play cards incessantly, so that his house became a common resort for gamblers. St. Andrew hearing of it, went to see him, but instead of pitying his bodily torments, he conversed with his cousin upon religious matters; among other things he asked: "Do you sincerely wish to be cured?" and the sick man, thinking that St. Andrew was mocking him, ordered him out of his house; but the Saint said: "Do not be angry with me, cousin, for the words that I have spoken, but in order to be restored to health, are you willing to follow my advice?" "Yes," replied the invalid. "Refrain, then, from card-playing for the space of seven days," said St. Andrew; "impose upon yourself a fast for six days; say daily the Our Father, and Hail Mary, and I promise you that the Blessed Virgin will obtain for you from her divine Son the blessing of health."

The sick man followed strictly the instructions given him by St. Andrew, and behold, upon the seventh day his health and strength returned, and from that time until the hour of his death he faithfully served God.

In the city of his residence there lived a wealthy nobleman, whose children had all died with the exception of a daughter, a child about ten years of age, who was also threatened with consumption. Finding that medicine afforded her no relief her father gave way to feelings of despondency. He one day entered her room, and kneeling by her bedside, exclaimed, "O my child, what can I do for your relief? you are my only treasure and joy in this world. If you can think of any thing that would gratify you for an instant, tell me, and I will procure it." The child burst into tears, and replied, "There is no hope for me, my father, unless our dear Lord and His holy Mother come to my assistance.

Go therefore to Brother Andrew, and beg him to pray for me, and to prepare some food for me with his own hands, and I feel confident that my strength will return." The father went at once to the convent and there found St. Andrew kneeling before a crucifix. He begged of him in God's name to come with him to visit his sick child. "I am but a poor sinner," said the humble religious, "but Almighty God will refuse nothing to those who place their trust in Him. Return to your home and I will soon follow." Having received permission from his Superior he went to the house of the sick child, and upon entering her room he said: "May God, in whom you have placed your trust, raise you up from your bed of pain in order that you may serve him." The little one then asked him to give her something to eat, which he would himself prepare. St. Andrew then took some bread and dipped it in wine, and offered up the following prayer: "O God, grant that this bread and wine may give health and strength to this sick child, whose whole hope is in Thee." After the child had eaten of the bread she fell asleep, and when she awoke she cried out, "Father, give me my clothes;" and rising from her bed perfectly cured, she walked to church in order to offer up her thanksgiving to God.

If St. Andrew were now living, how many sick would call him to their bedside! But He, from whom St. Andrew received the power to work miracles, still remains with us, and will come to visit us in our sickness. St. James says: "Is any man sick among you? Let him bring in the priests of the Church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord. And the prayer of faith shall save the sick man, and the Lord shall raise him up: and if he be in sins, they shall be forgiven him." James, 5: 14-15.

If you are weak and ill, the good God will come Himself to visit you in the most blessed Sacrament. Your sickness is sent to you, so that for a time at least, you may meditate upon the state of your soul. If you are tired and dispirited with your struggles in the world, listen to the words addressed to you by your heavenly Father: "Come to me, all you that labor, and are burdened, and I will refresh you." Matt. 11: 28.

If you are confined to your bed by sickness, do not spend your time in reading foolish novels, or in talking gossip. Think seriously of matters concerning your immortal soul, offer up your sufferings with a willing heart, and beg Almighty God to give you the grace to serve Him more perfectly, if it is His will that you should be restored to health. But if you have reason to think that your hours are numbered, then lose no time in making your peace with God—examine yourself, reflect upon the sins of your past life, make a good confession, and then resign yourself into the hands of your heavenly Father, who is full of compassion for those who sincerely desire to repent of their sins, and who wish to live with him in the world to come.

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## ST. MARCELLA.

(January 31.)

*"Reading the Holy Scriptures."*

THE great St. Jerome knew this Saint personally, and from a letter which he wrote concerning her after her death, we gather the following facts.

She was of noble birth and married shortly after her father's death, but was soon left a widow. An officer of high rank, but rather advanced in years, wished her to become his wife in order that he might leave her his immense wealth, but she said: "If I desired to marry, I would not marry for wealth alone."

Her only desire was to live for God, and unlike other rich and youthful widows, she dressed with the greatest simplicity. She gave liberally to the poor, associated only with persons who were known to be virtuous, and took good care of those whom she employed as servants. She read the Holy Scriptures, and advanced daily in the knowledge and love of God.

Whenever St. Jerome visited Rome, Marcella would seek to profit by his instructions, and she became so apt a pupil, that after he had left the city, persons who disputed upon certain passages of the sacred writings would come to her and abide by the decision she gave; but she would always say that it was the opinion of St. Jerome, or some other learned Doctor of the Church.

Her great learning was once the means of saving many from being led astray. A heresy sprang up by which even priests were deceived, and it spread so rapidly, and became so universal, that many who afterwards discovered their error were afraid to acknowledge their guilt. But Marcella came forward and publicly declared herself in favor of the true doctrine of the Church, and her extraordinary attainments and courage combined, caused many to renounce the heretical opinions they had so rashly embraced, so that the heresy soon died out.

At a later time a great calamity happened to the city of Rome. Alaric, king of the Goths, besieged the city and forced it to surrender. A famine had in the meantime broken out, and the scarcity of food was so great that St. Jerome mentions an instance of a mother having devoured her child.

As soon as the barbarians obtained possession of the city, they put to death all whom they could find, so that the streets ran with the blood of the murdered inhabitants, and no one could be found to bury the dead.

Some of the Goths entered the dwelling of Marcella, and commanded her to deliver up to them all the money she possessed, but finding that she had none in the house, they beat her in the most cruel manner. Instead of upbraiding them for their wickedness, she fell upon her knees and besought them to spare the life of her spiritual daughter Principia, and her meekness had such an effect

upon the rough soldiers, that they not only complied with her request, but even escorted them both to the church of St. Paul, where they were safe from further injury.

Soon after this occurrence, Marcella died in the peace of God. The zeal and fervor with which she sought to perfect herself in matters concerning religion, is beautifully expressed in one of the Psalms of the royal prophet David.

"Blessed is the man who hath not walked in the counsel of the ungodly, nor stood in the way of sinners, nor sat in the chair of pestilence. But his will is in the law of the Lord, and on his law he shall meditate day and night. And he shall be like a tree which is planted near the running waters, which shall bring forth its fruit in due season.

"And his leaf shall not fall off, and all whatsoever he shall do shall prosper.

"Not so the wicked, not so: but like the dust, which the wind driveth from the face of the earth.

"Therefore the wicked shall not rise again in judgment, nor sinners in the council of the just.

"For the Lord knoweth the way of the just, and the way of the wicked shall perish." Ps. 1.

The first verse of the above Psalm can be applied to those who do not live according to the precepts of their holy religion, for they "walk in the counsel of the ungodly." Many there are who live for the world instead of for God, who place no restraint upon their passions, but when it is too late they will find that they have been serving the devil in this world, and that he will claim them for his own in the world to come. He is called "blessed," however, who finds pleasure in listening to the word of God, and who meditates frequently upon the great truths of the Gospel, for he has discovered the fountain of living waters, and drinks from it.

In the East it sometimes happens that rain will not fall for months, so that the trees and flowers wither for want of moisture; but if a tree is planted on the bank of a river it will not suffer in the same degree; the leaves will remain fresh and green, and it will bud and blossom in due season. So it is with the soul of man; he whose only pleasure is in the things of the world, will at some time or other feel himself consumed by the dry, hot breath of the world; but the man who serves God and delights in reading His holy word, will find his soul refreshed and strengthened by the dew of the Holy Spirit, and will bring forth the fruits of good works. "He shall be like a tree which is planted near the running waters."

The wicked are compared to the chaff which outwardly resembles grain, but when the wind rises it is driven like dust from the face of the earth. So it is with the man who seems to all appearance to be honest, temperate, industrious,

and prudent, but who has no real love for God in his heart: the "wind," that is the judgment of God, shall scatter his so-called virtue like chaff.

In the last verse the Psalmist speaks of two ways, that of the just, and that of the wicked. The way of the wicked is easily found, for millions walk in it, each one pursuing a different path, but all leading to destruction. One is addicted to gambling, another to drinking, a third to licentiousness; many are proud, some pride themselves upon their wealth, some live in enmity with their neighbors; others there are who permit their children to grow up regardless of modesty, or oppress their servants and debtors; many neglect their vocation, or sin grievously with their tongues—but what an endless task it would be to enumerate the ways of the wicked; all of them lead as surely to perdition, as sickness, if not cured, leads to death.

In order to walk in the way of the just it is important that Christians should hear and read the word of God, meditate upon it, and gather strength and wisdom from the sacred fountain. St. Chrysostom says: "Not to know the Scriptures is to go to war without arms."

If you have neither the time nor the opportunity to become as learned as St. Marcella, do what you can towards supplying the deficiency—attend regularly the instructions given at Mass, associate with religious persons, and if you are in doubt concerning any of the fundamental truths of the Christian religion, go at once to your spiritual adviser and make known to him your wants. Seek diligently to inform yourself upon all matters relating to your holy faith. The Apostle says: "Be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope which is in you."

There never has been a Saint who did not thirst after the knowledge and love of God, and many indifferent Christians, by reading the sacred Scriptures, have amended their lives and become Saints. Remember therefore the words of the Lord: "Blessed are they who hear the word of God and keep it."

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# LEGENDS.

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## ST. IGNATIUS.

(February 1.)

"Wheat and tares."

THIS great Saint and Martyr, like a high priest, heads the procession of holy men and women whose lives will pass in review before us upon each day of this month.

St. Ignatius was a disciple of the Apostles, and was consecrated by them Bishop of Antioch. Tradition says that he was the child whom the Saviour called to Him, and placing him in the midst of His disciples, said to them: "Unless you be converted, and become as little children, you shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven."

"Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, he is the greater in the kingdom of heaven." Matt. 18: 3-4.

To be a Bishop in those days was to draw down upon whoever filled the office, the wrath and displeasure of the Pagan emperors. — It was during the reign of the cruel Domitian that Ignatius was appointed to the See of Antioch. He endeavored by prayer, fasting, and exhortations to confirm the Christians in their faith, and it was revealed to him by the Holy Ghost, that but few would apostatize. A persecution broke out, and at its close the holy Bishop rejoiced that so many had remained firm in their faith, and that the Church could once more enjoy the blessings of peace; but his heart was filled with sadness because he himself had not been called upon to suffer as a martyr. He continued however to shine like a brilliant star before his people, and his instructions and pious admonitions sank deep into their hearts. The love of God consumed him,

and appeared in every thing that he said and did; it was for this reason that he received the name of Theophoros, that is, one who carries God in his heart.

A second persecution commenced under the reign of the emperor Trajan. St. Chrysostom remarks that "hell arrayed itself against the shepherd in order to destroy the fold." Trajan came himself to Antioch, had Ignatius brought before him, and then accused him of refusing to worship the gods, and of persuading others to follow his example. In reply the Saint said: "It is foolish to speak of gods; there is but one God, who made heaven and earth, and but one Saviour, Jesus Christ, His only begotten Son, whose love is the only treasure that I seek. I carry Christ within my heart, for He has said, 'Abide in me and I will abide in you.'" The emperor then said: "It is my will that Ignatius, who declares that he carries his God within him, shall be taken in chains to Rome to be made a spectacle of to the people, and he shall there be devoured by wild beasts."

Hearing this command given, the holy Bishop, full of joy, exclaimed: "I thank thee, O God, that I have been found worthy to die for Thy love, and I am grateful for the honor of wearing chains as did St. Paul. It is the sincere desire of my heart to suffer martyrdom."

He was accordingly placed in charge of ten soldiers, who treated him most cruelly while making the journey from Antioch to Rome, but the Christians of the different cities through which he passed paid him every mark of respect and love; they met him at all points, rendered him all the assistance in their power, walked with him, and comforted him with their prayers, and in return for their loving kindness Ignatius benefited them by his example, and confirmed them in their love for Christ.

On his way to Rome he passed through Smyrna, of which city Polycarp, also a disciple of the Apostles, was Bishop. Ignatius besought Polycarp to pray for him, that he might die a martyr's death. For fear of an insurrection among the Christians in Rome, or that their prayers might prevent his obtaining the long wished-for crown, he addressed to them a letter in which he said: "I have never had such an opportunity to gain heaven as I now have; do not let your love snatch it from my grasp, when the altar is prepared and the victim willing to be sacrificed. Thank God rather that he is taking me from this world of trouble to share with him the never-ending joys of His eternal kingdom. Pray that I may remain firm in my desire to die for Christ. Do not let your compassion for my miserable body cause you to refuse my last request; it is my desire to be devoured by wild beasts, and to find my grave within them. I care nothing for torments if I only find Christ; my love is already crucified and the fire within me can not be extinguished. I shall obey the call of him who says, 'Come to the Father.' I am the wheat of Christ; may I be ground by the teeth of wild beasts that I may be found pure bread."

As soon as the arrival of Ignatius became known in Italy, the Christians went in crowds to meet him. They were filled with joy when they saw him, but could not restrain their grief when they knew that he whom they had loved and venerated as a Saint, was condemned to death. Many of them endeavored to bribe the soldiers in order that he might escape; but Ignatius conjured them to place no obstacle in his path to Paradise, or to delay his meeting with the beloved of his soul. In obedience to the command of the emperor, the Saint was then taken to the Coliseum, which was a large building in the form of an amphitheatre, having its arena encompassed with rows of seats rising higher as they receded from the arena, on which people used to sit to view the combats of gladiators and of wild beasts, and other sports. Beneath were cages, or stalls, in which the animals were kept. If any one was condemned to death he was thrown into the arena, and the wild beasts then let loose upon him.

Having arrived there, Ignatius was led into the arena, and two lions, to whom no food had been given for days in order to make them the more ferocious, were then uncaged. Seeing them approach, the Saint joyfully exclaimed: "I am the wheat of Christ; may I be ground by the teeth of wild beasts that I may be found pure bread;" making use of the very words with which he had closed his epistle to the Christians of Rome. The lions then rushed upon him, and tearing him into pieces, devoured him.

Some Christians who were present thus describe the fearful sight: "After witnessing the terrible scene in sorrow and in tears, we remained together all night watching and praying. We implored Almighty God upon our knees to console us, and to give us some assurance of the eternal welfare of Ignatius. Some who had fallen asleep saw Ignatius coming in haste to embrace us; others saw him praying for us, and giving us his blessing; and to some he appeared like a person who had come forth from a combat, with great marks of exhaustion, but standing before the throne of God radiant with happiness and crowned with glory. Then with one accord did we praise the Giver of all good things, and rejoice in the bliss He had bestowed upon Ignatius. We have recorded the day and year of his death so that we may celebrate the event in after years, hoping to participate in the fruits of the victory gained by this noble soldier of Jesus Christ, to whom with the Father and Holy Ghost be all honor and glory now and forever. Amen."

Christianity is the heavenly grain, and its field is the earth; but the soil possesses one of two qualities: it is either fruitful or barren. Sometimes, even when the ground is cultivated, the seed does not spring up. Such was the case with the Jews, for although wise in other things, they showed their folly in refusing to believe in Jesus Christ; while on the other hand the pagans resembled a forest of noble trees into which the sun had never penetrated, until the light of the blessed Gospel dispelled the darkness of their unbelief. St. Ignatius and



St. Polycarp are like the ears of wheat, from the seed of which so many hundreds and thousands of holy Christians have sprung up.

What a sad sight it is to see men who neglect their religion and who become angry when spoken to on the subject of their eternal salvation; they are like a field in which nothing but weeds spring up, for their hearts are filled with envy, hypocrisy, and all manner of evil things. A poor heathen who has never heard of Christ is as much more pleasing in the sight of God, as a noble oak is to our eyes, when compared with a blade of grass.

How is it with you, dear reader? Has the good seed taken root within your heart? have you nourished the growth of piety and virtue in your soul? or has the seed fallen upon barren soil, and "withered away because it had no moisture?" Do not console yourself with the miserable thought that you are as good as those who live in the present generation. Take as your models men like Ignatius and the other Saints of God, meditate upon heavenly things as they did, and advance daily in the knowledge and love of Jesus Christ. In conclusion we will add the prayer used by the Church upon this feast of one of her greatest martyrs.

"Have regard to our weakness, O Almighty God, and as the weight of our own deeds is grievous to us, may the glorious intercession of blessed Ignatius, Thy martyr and Bishop, protect us. Through our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen."

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## THE PURIFICATION OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY, OR CANDLEMAS DAY.

(February 2.)

THIS Festival reminds us of two important events in sacred history: of the Presentation, or the offering up of our divine Lord to His Heavenly Father in the temple of Jerusalem, and at the same time of the Purification of His blessed mother, the Virgin Mary.

In the celebration of this great feast, two mysteries are proposed for our meditation, the most Holy of Holies, the eternal priest of the new law, offers Himself up to His Heavenly Father, and the purest of Virgins subjects herself to the law of purification.

Both ceremonies were prescribed by the Jewish law. God Himself in the time of Moses gave a law to the Jews, shortly before their exodus from Egypt, in which He commanded that all the first-born of the male sex, except the sons of the tribe of Levi, who were set apart for the service of the altar, should be

sanctified and offered up to Him, and afterwards redeemed by certain gifts. "And the Lord spoke to Moses, saying: Sanctify unto me every first-born that openeth the womb among the children of Israel, as well of men as of beasts; for they are all mine." Exodus, 13: 1-2. In obedience to this divine command Moses said to the people: "And when the Lord shall have brought thee into the land of the Canaanite, as He swore to thee and thy fathers, and shall give it thee: Thou shalt set apart all that openeth the womb for the Lord, and all that is first brought forth of thy cattle: whatsoever thou shalt have of the male sex, thou shalt consecrate to the Lord. And every first-born of men thou shalt redeem with a price." Exodus, 13: 11-13.

The price for redeeming the first-born was afterwards fixed by the Lord Himself at five sicles of silver. Numbers, 18: 16. Moses giving as the cause of this law, the putting to death of the first-born amongst the Egyptians, and the subsequent deliverance of the Jews from Egyptian bondage.

When the Israelites were in the desert, the Lord gave them a law in regard to the purifications of mothers after the birth of a child, saying to Moses: "Speak to the children of Israel, and thou shalt say to them: If a woman.....shall bear a man-child she shall be unclean seven days:.....And on the eighth day the infant shall be circumcised: But she shall remain three and thirty days in the blood of her purification. She shall touch no holy thing, neither shall she enter into the sanctuary until the days of her purification be fulfilled. And when the days of her purification are expired, she shall bring to the door of the tabernacle of the testimony, a lamb of a year old for a holocaust, and a young pigeon, or a turtle for sin, and shall deliver them to the priest, who shall offer them before the Lord, and shall pray for her, and so she shall be cleansed. And if her hand find not sufficiency, and she is not able to offer a lamb, she shall take two turtles, or two young pigeons, one for a holocaust and another for sin, and the priest shall pray for her, and so she shall be cleansed." (Levit. 12: 2-8.)

#### INTROIT OF THE MASS.

"We have received Thy mercy, O God, in the midst of Thy temple: according to Thy name, O God, so also is Thy praise unto the ends of the earth: Thy right hand is full of justice." (Ps. 47.)

"Great is the Lord, and exceedingly to be praised: in the city of our God, in his holy mountain."

Glory be to the Father, etc.

The Church expresses in these words her joy for the manifestation of God's mercy through the Incarnation of His only begotten Son, who for the first time appeared in the temple.

## PRAYER.

O Almighty and everlasting God, we suppliantly beseech Thy majesty, that as Thy only begotten Son was this day presented in the temple in the substance of our flesh, so Thou wouldst grant us to be presented to Thee with purified souls. Through the same Lord, etc.

## EPISTLE.—Mal. 3: 1-4.

“Thus saith the Lord: Behold I send my Angel, and he shall prepare the way before thy face. And presently the Lord, whom you seek, and the Angel of the testament, whom you desire, shall come to his temple. Behold he cometh, saith the Lord of hosts: And who shall be able to think of the day of his coming? and who shall stand to see him? for he is like a refining fire, and like the fuller’s herb; And he shall sit refining and cleansing the silver, and he shall purify the sons of Levi, and shall refine them as gold, and as silver, and they shall offer sacrifices to the Lord in justice. And the sacrifice of Juda and of Jerusalem shall please the Lord, as in the days of old, and in the ancient years, saith the Lord of hosts.”

By the angel, who according to this prophecy should “prepare the way of the Lord,” was meant St. John the Baptist; but by the Lord, called also the “Angel of the testament,” who should come to His temple, is meant the expected Messiah, who would establish a new covenant between God and man. His first coming, according to the prophet, would bring great blessings upon mankind. His second coming, however, will be full of terror to those who have not confessed their faith in Him. He will then purify the good like gold and silver, that is, He will separate the good from the wicked.

## GOSPEL.—Luke 2: 22-32.

“At that time: After the days of Mary’s purification according to the law of Moses were accomplished, they carried Jesus to Jerusalem to present Him to the Lord. As it is written in the law of the Lord: ‘Every male opening the womb shall be called holy to the Lord.’ And to offer a sacrifice according as it is written in the law of the Lord, a pair of turtle-doves, or two young pigeons. And behold there was a man in Jerusalem named Simeon, and this man was just and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel: and the Holy Ghost was in him. And he had received an answer from the Holy Ghost, that he should not see death before he had seen the CHRIST of the Lord. And he came by the Spirit into the temple. And when his parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him according to the custom of the law, he also took him into his arms, and blessed God, and said: Now thou dost dismiss thy servant, O Lord, according to thy word, in peace: Because my eyes have seen thy salvation, which thou hast prepared before the face of all peoples: A light to the revelation of the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel.”



The Gospel of to-day recounts to us in a simple, but at the same time, in a most touching manner, how Mary and Joseph carried the Divine Infant to the temple in humble submission to the law of God. It tells us also how in simplicity and humility the new-born King of the Jews entered into the principal city of His people, and that for the first time he offered Himself to His Heavenly Father. According to the Gospel, the Virgin Mother brought a pair of turtle-doves, the offering usually made by the poor, and she then redeemed her Divine Child with five pieces of silver—a most significant type of the five wounds which He would receive when hanging upon the cross.

In speaking of the Presentation of Jesus in the temple, St. Bernard says: "Offer up thy Son, O holy Virgin, present to the Father the blessed fruit of thy womb; offer up as an atoning sacrifice that which is pleasing in His sight, for has He not said, 'This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased?' But alas! the time will come when He will not be offered up in the temple, and when the arms of the holy Simeon will not be ready to receive Him; outside of the city of Jerusalem there will be erected a cross, and upon its arms will He be stretched. The time will come when instead of being redeemed by the blood of animals, He will redeem mankind with His own most precious blood. The presentation in the temple will be as the morning sacrifice, in speaking of which the prophet Isaiah says: 'He was offered because it was His own will,' (Is. 53: 7.) and His death upon the cross will be as the evening sacrifice."

His first manifestation to His people, was on the occasion of His presentation in the temple, although not yet announced as the long-expected Messiah. His divinity, however, was revealed to Simeon and Anna, who deserved it on account of their holy and virtuous lives. St. Ambrose says: "Not only the angels and the prophets, the shepherds and His parents, but even the old and the just gave testimony of the new-born Son of God. Every age and generation, and even wonderful events established the fact of His divine origin. A virgin became a mother, the barren Elizabeth brought forth a son, the dumb Zachary spoke, Elizabeth prophesied, he, who was hidden in his mother's womb, exulted, (St. John) wise men from the East adored Him, and Simeon the Just expected Him."

How significant and beautiful are the words of Simeon, filled with holy joy at seeing his expectations fulfilled, and having beheld with his eyes, Him whom he justly calls "a light to the revelation of the Gentiles;" his only desire is to depart in peace. The Church repeats every day in her office the words of Simeon, proposing him to us as a model of a happy death. St. Ambrose says: "He was truly a just man who desired not only his own salvation, but that of the whole world, who expressed a wish to die in order that he might see the promised Saviour, for it is written: 'Blessed are the eyes that see Him.' After holding the Divine Child in his arms, he exclaims: 'Now thou dost dismiss thy servant, O Lord, according to thy word, in peace, because my eyes have seen

thy salvation.' Behold the just, who confined in the prison of this perishable body, 'desires to be dissolved and to be with Christ, a thing by far the better.' He, therefore, who cares not for the world, let him go into the temple, there will he find his Saviour. Let him take the word of God into his hands, and by leading a virtuous life, deserve the embrace of his heavenly Father, so that after having seen the life he shall not see death."

The Divine Infant carried into the temple by His devout parents, and there recognized and honored by two of the most holy persons among the people, is one of the most beautiful and striking events in sacred history.

Writing upon this subject, the great St. Bernard says: "On this day the Virgin Mother brings the Lord of the temple into the temple of the Lord. St. Joseph presents to the Lord not his own son, but the Son of Him in whom He is well pleased. Simeon sees with his eyes the long-expected one, Anna the widow praises Him. These four persons formed the procession that accompanied Him in His first solemn entrance into the temple; but now all Christians celebrate the event. We must not be astonished that so few were found ready to receive Him, for He was but a little child who was to be presented; no sinner, however, was among them, all were just, holy, and perfect. David rejoiced to see that day; for if he had not seen it in spirit, how could he have sung, 'We have received thy mercy, O God, in the midst of thy temple.' David therefore received this mercy, so did Simeon, and so shall we obtain eternal life, for Christ is the same now as then, and will be the same for ever."

On this festival a beautiful ceremony exists in the Catholic Church: the blessing of candles before Mass, and the procession—hence the name of the feast, Candlemas. The blessing of the candles reminds us how Jesus, the light of the world, revealed Himself for the first time in the temple, and was called by Simeon, "a light to the revelation of the Gentiles."

The procession reminds us of His first entrance into the temple, accompanied by Mary and Joseph, Simeon and Anna. "So should we proceed," says St. Bernard, "two by two, holding burning candles in our hands, and praising God, whose glory and majesty is very great."

The blessing of candles and the procession has for us another signification. In the prayers used on the occasion, we are admonished as being children of light, to walk in the light which the Saviour brought to us from heaven, to follow the light which we have received through faith, to despise the works of darkness, to adorn ourselves with good works, and like the prudent virgins, to meet the heavenly Bridegroom with our lamps trimmed and burning: that is to say, we should always cherish in our hearts a lively faith, an ardent hope, and a burning charity.

#### PRAYER FOR THE BLESSING OF THE CANDLES.

"O Lord Jesus Christ, the true light who enlightenest every man coming

into this world, pour forth Thy blessing † upon these candles, and sanctify † them with the light of Thy grace; and mercifully grant, that as these lights enkindled with visible fire dispel nocturnal darkness, so our hearts illumined by invisible fire, that is, the brightness of the Holy Spirit, may be free from the blindness of all vice; that our mental eye being purified, we may perceive those things which are pleasing to Thee and profitable to our salvation; so that after the dark perils of this world we may deserve to arrive at never-failing light: through Thee, Christ Jesus, Saviour of the world, who in perfect Trinity livest and reignest God, world without end. Amen."

After the ceremony, those who have brought candles to be blessed, leave some for the Church, and take home the rest for their own use, which they light upon certain occasions, such as at the death-bed of the faithful, during thunder storms, or when they are apprehensive of any danger happening to them. This custom is sanctioned by the Church, as we shall see by reading the following prayer, which is said by the priest at the blessing of the candles:

"O Holy Lord, Father Almighty, eternal God, who didst create all things out of nothing, and by Thy command didst cause this liquid to come by the labor of bees to the perfection of wax; and on this day didst fulfill the petition of the just man Simeon; we humbly beseech Thee, that by the invocation of Thy most holy name, and by the intercession of blessed Mary ever virgin, whose festival is this day devoutly celebrated, and by the prayers of all thy Saints, thou wouldst vouchsafe to bless † and sanctify † these candles for the use of men, and the health of bodies and souls, whether upon earth, or on the waters; and wouldst hear from Thy holy heaven, and from the seat of Thy majesty, the voices of this Thy people who desire to bear them with honor in their hands, and to praise Thee with hymns; and wouldst be propitious to all that call upon Thee, whom Thou hast redeemed with the precious blood of Thy Son; who lives and reigns with Thee in the unity of the Holy Ghost, God, world without end. Amen."

Another pious custom exists in the Catholic Church, reminding us of the festival of to-day—the churching of women after the birth of a child. There can, however, be no question of a purification as prescribed in the Jewish law, for the Jewish ceremonies, abolished by Christ, had lost their significance, and were replaced in the new law, by the commandment of love. Although the churching of Christian women is not strictly commanded, its usage has a meaning adapted to the beautiful spirit of Christianity which should be a sufficient reason for mothers to submit themselves to it. By going to church before they visit any other place, they only pay a debt of gratitude to God, for carrying them safely through the perils of child-birth, and for giving them the health and strength to appear again in His holy temple. Let them imitate also the example of the Blessed Virgin, and offer up their child to God, recommend it to His paternal care, and beg of Him to receive it as His own. Let them entreat



Him to assist them in bringing up their child for heaven, and in the knowledge and fear of God.

It is for this reason that they come to church, receive the blessing of the priest, and unite their prayers with his, that the grace of God may descend upon them and upon their offspring.

It is customary in some places for not only the mother, but for the father to appear with the child in the church, as Joseph did with Mary, when they brought the Divine Infant to be offered up to His Heavenly Father in the temple of Jerusalem.

The Church, however, refuses this blessing to those who are not married according to her rites, or to those who have not had their children baptized, and to the mothers of illegitimate children.

#### PRAYER FOR WOMEN AFTER CHILD-BIRTH.

“Almighty and merciful God, who didst lay upon our mother Eve the fit punishment for her disobedience, that she should bear children in sorrow, I offer up to Thee all the pains of my child-bearing in propitiation for my sins; and I thank Thee that, through Thy help, the fruit of my womb has been safely brought forth into the world, and new-born in baptism. According to the example of the Mother of Thy only-begotten Son, I also offer up to Thee my child for Thy holy service, and will earnestly strive to bring it up to Thy honor. To this end, give me, through the intercession of the most blessed Virgin, Thy grace; bless me and my child, and grant that we may live according to Thy will here, and hereafter may obtain everlasting happiness. Through Jesus Christ, thy Son, our Lord. Amen.”

[This feast belongs properly to the Ecclesiastical Year, but as it is celebrated on the 2nd of February we have placed it among the Legends.]

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### ST. ANSGARIUS.

(February 3.)

“Humility.”

ST. ANSGARIUS, who lived more than one thousand years ago, was placed by his father in the convent of Corbin, in France, to receive his education. He soon distinguished himself by his piety and great industry, and at a later period when a branch of the order was established in Saxony, Ansgarius, who had already declared his intention of becoming a priest, was sent thither with several other monks to teach the doctrine of Christ. Although but twenty-four years

of age, he was chosen to be director of the school attached to the convent, and appointed to fill the office of preacher to the people. But it was the ardent desire of Ansgarius to announce the Gospel to the heathens and to suffer martyrdom, if it was the will of God.

At that time the inhabitants of the northern part of Europe—Denmark, Sweden, and Norway—were in a state of the most barbarous ignorance; they worshiped idols, and believed firmly in the decisions of prophetesses, who would pretend to foretell future events by dipping their hands in the blood of captives whom they caused to be put to death, in order that they might practice their diabolical art.

The priests sacrificed not only animals, but human beings, and many fathers would kill their sons in their efforts to propitiate the gods, and to obtain a prolongation of their own lives, and victory over their enemies. They were constantly at war with their neighbors, and spent their lives in poverty and in the most brutal ignorance, and thus became a terror to all surrounding nations. The slaves among them were entirely at the mercy of their masters, and were often treated in the most cruel manner, and they permitted the spirit of revenge to rule them to such a degree, that they would destroy with fire and sword the property and families of those who had incurred their hatred.

It was a common practice among them to drown infants, or to give them as food to wild beasts, and it was the universal custom to bury a child alive, if the mother died. In Greenland and Iceland the nights are long and the cold piercing, but darker and more bitter was the ignorance and hatred that filled the hearts of the inhabitants of those barbarous countries.

Harold, king of Denmark, had been dethroned, and he fled to the emperor of Germany to solicit his aid in recovering his kingdom. During his stay at the imperial court, he and his whole family were converted to Christianity, and in order to propagate the truths of the Gospel among the Danes, it was the wish of the emperor that a priest should accompany Harold on his return to Denmark.

The difficulty, however, was to find a priest willing and able to undertake so important, but at the same time so dangerous a mission. Walla, the Abbot of Corbin, having told the emperor that Ansgarius, a member of his order, and a man full of zeal for the kingdom of God, might be induced to go with Harold; the emperor sent for the holy priest. Having entered the royal chamber he was asked if he was desirous of proclaiming the word of God to the natives of Denmark, but that if unwilling to make the sacrifice, to have no hesitation in saying so. The only answer Ansgarius made was: "Here I am; send me there." His friends blamed him greatly for his rashness in accepting the offer, and endeavored to dissuade him from his purpose, but Ansgarius remained firm, and Autbert, a young monk of noble birth, volunteered to be his companion.

They first went with Harold to Jutland, and from there to Denmark, where

by their instructions and holy example many pagans were brought to the knowledge of God. They established a seminary, bought the children of slaves, and educated them as Christian teachers, who should assist them in their noble efforts to spread the religion of Christ among the heathens; but Autbert became ill and died, and Harold being always at war, and having lost his zeal for the cause of Christ, Ansgarius was recalled to Germany by the emperor.

In the mean time, the emperor had been informed by merchants coming from Sweden that many of the people belonging to that country were anxious to be taught something concerning the religion of Christ, and that the king was kindly disposed towards Christians. Ansgarius declared himself ready to undertake the mission, and after a dangerous passage, arrived in Sweden, and with his companions was presented to the king, who treated them with every consideration. Ansgarius preached daily to the people, converted many to the true faith, founded schools for Christian instruction, caused a church to be built, and after a stay of eighteen months returned to Germany to inform the emperor of the manner in which things were progressing on his mission.

The emperor resolved to establish an archbishopric on the extreme borders of his empire, and the city of Hamburg was chosen as the residence of the new Archbishop. The diocese comprised all of the country extending from Hamburg to the furthest city in the north of Europe, and Ansgarius was appointed to fill this important See. It was at that time the largest in the world, but in the vast extent of country there were but four parish churches and nearly all of the inhabitants were still ignorant of the truths of Christianity, so that it became the duty of Ansgarius to dispel the night of unbelief by the blessed light of the Gospel.

Soon after his consecration he laid the foundation for a church and convent in the city of Hamburg, and established a seminary for the education of young men as missionaries. He made frequent journeys to Denmark, Sweden, and other parts of his extensive diocese, preaching everywhere the doctrine of Christ, and receiving many into the Church.

Meanwhile, the Normans, who were at that time a barbarous people, attacked the city of Hamburg with a large fleet, and destroyed the church, seminary, and other prominent buildings, murdered many of the citizens, and those whose lives they spared were taken off as slaves. Ansgarius barely escaped with his life, and as if to increase his sorrows, a persecution broke out in Sweden at this very time, and for a long period no Catholic priest was permitted to enter the country. But the true Christian never loses his confidence in God, for although the holy Ansgarius wandered about from place to place, poor and forsaken, he was never heard to murmur at his hard fate, but on the contrary would frequently exclaim in the words of Job: "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away: as it hath pleased the Lord, so is it done: blessed be the name of the Lord."



A wealthy lady by the name of Ikia, moved to pity at the sight of the venerable Archbishop who had suffered so much, presented him with an estate not far from Hamburg, so that he was again enabled to collect around him some of his priests, who had also succeeded in escaping the sword of the Normans. Soon after the Bishop of Bremen died, and that See having been united to that of Hamburg, Ansgarius of course became his successor.

He went often to visit Eric, king of Denmark, who was at one time a terror to the Christians, but who now cherished such a warm regard for Ansgarius, that he even allowed him to preach the Gospel of Christ to his subjects, and gave his royal permission to the Christians to build a church in Schleswig—the first ever erected in his kingdom.

His efforts having been blessed in Denmark, and leaving good and pious priests to continue the work he had commenced, the zealous Ansgarius embarked for Sweden. Before he was suffered to land, the king of Sweden cast lots as to whether the Christian religion should be introduced among his subjects or not, and the lot falling in favor of Christianity, the Archbishop was received. He immediately commenced to build a church, and for two years labored diligently in teaching the sacred truths of religion. But dark clouds again began to lower, for Eric the king died, and was succeeded by one who hated everything connected with Christianity.

Wicked counsellors encouraged the new king to use harsh measures against the Christians; the church at Schleswig was accordingly closed, the celebration of Mass forbidden, the priests sent into exile, and the Christians persecuted to such a degree, that they were glad to escape with their lives, leaving their possessions in the hands of their enemies. Although it grieved the heart of Ansgarius to see the work of years destroyed almost in a moment, his courage did not forsake him, and it pleased Almighty God to comfort His pious servant with hopes that were soon after realized.

Ansgarius was on the eve of setting out for Denmark in order that he might remonstrate with the king for his treatment of the Christians, when the news reached him that Count Hovi, the most bitter enemy of the Christians, had incurred the displeasure of the king, and had been banished from Denmark. No longer under the influence of this bad man, the heart of the king became softened towards his Christian subjects. He sent word to Ansgarius that they might again exercise the duties of their holy religion, recalled the exiled priests, and received Ansgarius with the greatest kindness when he came to Denmark. He allowed the Christians to build a church in Ripen, and after receiving instruction became himself a Christian. The Catholic religion had now obtained a firm footing in Denmark, and the great work of Ansgarius, although frequently interrupted, was at last crowned with success.

Ansgarius spent the remainder of his life in visiting the Christian communities, which were constantly increasing throughout his diocese, and in giving

good advice to the priests, his fellow-laborers in the vineyard of the Lord. He celebrated Mass in the different parish churches of his diocese, and preached and converted many to the true faith. The greater part of his revenues he devoted to the building of churches, and through his efforts many convents and seminaries for the education of priests were established in different parts of his extensive diocese. No mother ever evinced a more tender solicitude for her children than did Ansgarius for the large number of Christians committed to his care, to preserve them in their faith, and to win over to Christ those who were still groping about in the darkness of unbelief.

When in his sixty-third year, he became ill, and feeling the approach of death, he settled the affairs of his diocese; and after having for the last time admonished and advised those around him to persevere in the good works he had commenced, he died in the peace of God. The seed planted by Ansgarius throve so well, that one hundred and fifty years after his death the greater part of Sweden, Norway, Schleswig, and Denmark were under the dominion of the Holy See.

Few men have lived a holier life, or accomplished more good than did the pious Archbishop Ansgarius. His kindness, charity, and hospitality—virtues that we have not even mentioned—caused his biographer to compare him with Saints like John the Baptist, Peter, Paul, and Stephen. He was so full of the spirit of meekness and humility, that he could never convince himself that he had properly fulfilled his sacred duties, especially as Almighty God had denied him the privilege of dying a martyr's death. When asked if he thought his friend Rimbert worthy to succeed him, he declared him more fit to become an Archbishop than he himself had ever been to receive the sub-deaconship. His last words were: "God be merciful to me a sinner."

How different is the characteristic humility of the holy Ansgarius from the exalted opinion that Christians generally entertain of themselves. The righteousness of which they boast frequently proceeds from the very loose opinions which they hold upon certain points of Catholic doctrine. Many Christians imagine that because they are not very much troubled when going to confession that all is well with them; just as the consumptive patient fancies that the hectic flush indicates the sure return of health, instead of the stealthy approach of death.

They should not rely too much upon a quiet conscience; let them beware lest in a blind worship of themselves they entirely forget God, whom they are bound to serve in all things. Therefore, dear reader, it behooves us to be cautious in matters so nearly concerning our eternal salvation. Meditate upon the words written in the Apocalypse to the Bishop of Laodicea: "Thou sayest: I am rich, and made wealthy, and have need of nothing: and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked. I counsel thee to buy of me gold fire-tried, that thou mayest be made rich: and mayest

be clothed in white garments, and that the shame of thy nakedness may not appear: and anoint thine eyes with eye-salve, that thou mayest see."

The "eye-salve" here spoken of is the acknowledgment of our sinfulness, and the poverty of our soul; and the "gold, fire-tried," are the good works which we have accomplished by means of grace, and out of love to God. If we wish to be happy in the world to come, let us make the firm resolution to be modest and humble in every thing that concerns ourselves, and never to be blind to our own defects. Let us beg of God to open our eyes that we may see our faults, and to give us the true knowledge and love of our holy faith.

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## ST. PHILEAS.

(February 4.)

"Thou shalt love God above all things."

THE Apostle Paul, in his first epistle to Timothy, (5: 8) says: "If any man have not care of his own, and especially those of his house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel."

It is therefore a holy duty, and one that even heathens practice, to love and cherish our relations; but we should never permit our love for them to interfere with the duty we owe to God. We shall see in reading the life of St. Phileas, how a true Christian acts when subjected to the temptation of choosing between God, and those who by ties of blood are nearest and dearest to him.

St. Phileas was in possession of all that could make life valuable: immense wealth, a distinguished position, great learning, a beloved family, and many friends.

During the reign of the emperor Diocletian, he was cast into prison at the time of the persecution against the Christians. He was taken for trial before a judge who had always been his friend, and who determined to use every effort to save the life of one whom he so highly esteemed. He commenced the proceedings by first ordering Phileas to sacrifice to the gods. "I do not sacrifice," said the Christian. "Why not?" asked the judge. "Because it is written in the holy Scriptures, that he who serves any but the true God, shall perish." "Then sacrifice to your God," said the judge, for he thought that if he could only induce Phileas to say that he would offer sacrifice even to the God of the Christians, he would then be enabled to save his life by declaring that he had sacrificed, although not to the idols; but the Christian hero only answered the well-meant proposition of the judge by saying that the only sacri-



fice he could offer, and that would be acceptable to God, was that of a pure heart and of a contrite spirit. "The words that you utter have no weight with me," replied the judge; "do as I command, and offer sacrifice." "I shall not," answered Phileas. "Is it then a matter of conscience?" said the judge, and receiving an answer in the affirmative, he added: "If you think yourself bound to observe the rules of your religion in not offering sacrifice, think too of the obligations that you owe to your wife and family." "My duty to God surpasses all other things," replied Phileas, "for he has said: 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve.'" "Which one of the gods?" asked the judge. Raising his hands on high, Phileas answered: "The God who has made the heaven and the earth, the sea, and all that is therein; the Creator of all things visible and invisible: He whose name is the Eternal."

The judge told Phileas that for his brother's sake he would endeavor to save his life, but the Saint asked as a favor that he might be put to death.

Astonished at such a demand, the judge said: "What reasons have you for making such a request? You have wealth sufficient to support a province of the empire, and every thing to make life desirable; why then should you wish to die?" "To die will be my gain," was the noble answer. Some pagans who were fondly attached to Phileas, in their efforts to save his life declared to the judge that he had privately sacrificed to the gods; but instead of keeping silence and thereby preserving his life, Phileas publicly testified that he had never dreamed of doing such a thing. Determined to make a last appeal, the judge said: "Think of your poor wife whom you will leave desolate." "Jesus Christ, in whose sacred cause I wear these chains, and who has called me to the inheritance of his glory in the world to come, will strengthen and console her, and bring her to everlasting life," was the answer made by Phileas. A friend of the family's then asked for a respite. "I will grant it," said the judge, "in order that the prisoner may have time to reflect." "I have had sufficient time for reflection," replied Phileas, "and I have determined to die for Christ."

The friends and relatives of the Christian martyr came daily to see him, and implored him upon their knees to yield to the emperor's command, if only for the sake of his wife and children; but the Saint remained firm, and never wavered for an instant in his allegiance to the one true God, thereby making friends with the Saints and martyrs who had gone before him, and who had already suffered the fate that he so calmly awaited.

Philoromus, a Roman officer, who had been a silent witness of the fortitude with which Phileas had withstood the tears and supplications of his kindred, and the artful suggestions of the judge, could no longer restrain himself, but loudly exclaimed: "Why do you make such efforts to overcome the virtue of this good man? Tempt not the soul that is faithful to God! Urge him not to

obey man in preference to God. His eyes already behold the glory and majesty of the King of kings, and cannot be moved at the sight of your tears; and his ears are deaf to your appeals, for he hears the voice of his heavenly Father calling him to receive the reward promised to all who serve him faithfully."

Enraged at hearing these words, the pagans demanded that Philoromus should also suffer death, and they both were accordingly sentenced to be beheaded.

On their way to the place of execution, the brother of Phileas, almost beside himself with grief, told the judge that Phileas desired to be pardoned; the judge sent at once for him and asked him if it was really the case. But the only reply made by the Christian was that he had never entertained such a wish. "On the contrary," said he, "I thank the tribunal for its sentence, because it has opened to me the gates of the kingdom of heaven." He was then again led to the scaffold, and full of courage and serenity, received with his companion the fatal stroke.

Behold in Phileas the type of a true Christian, who gave up all for God, and who did not hesitate to renounce every earthly advantage when called upon to choose between the ties of kindred, or the just claims of God.

Let us consider then, dear reader, who is deserving of the greater part of our love, God or our relatives? Of whom must we stand in fear, of God or our relatives? Into whose hands do we fall when the dark gates of death shut us out from this world; into those of God, or into those of our relatives?

We all know that there is a connection between the body and the soul, but that the soul is infinitely above the body; and it is for this reason that we are bound to listen to the promptings of the spirit in preference to those of the heart, and to do the will of God, rather than yield to the demands of earthly relations.

God breathed His spirit into us, and if we hope to dwell with Him in heaven and to become one in the noble army of Saints and martyrs who have sacrificed all for Christ, we should turn a deaf ear to the entreaties of kindred when they are in opposition to the will of God. We belong to God; the agony that He suffered upon Calvary was greater than that ever suffered by a mother in bringing her children into the world; we are nourished, not with milk, but with His own most precious body and blood. There is a mysterious and sacred bond between the Christian and Jesus Christ, and by loving Him more than we do any thing upon earth, we but fulfill the command given by Him to His disciples: "He that loveth father or mother more than me, is not worthy of me, and he that loveth son or daughter more than me, is not worthy of me." (Matt. 10: 37.)

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## ST. AGATHA.

(February 5.)

*"Veneration of the Saints."*

IN every Mass there is a prayer said after the Elevation, in which we implore Almighty God to receive us into the company of His Apostles and martyrs, and among the few whose names are mentioned is that of St. Agatha. Her purity of life must have been very great, to procure for her a place in the prayers said during the divine sacrifice. More than a thousand years have passed away, and millions of Masses have been offered, and in all of them has her intercession been asked in our behalf.

St. Agatha belonged to a wealthy and distinguished family in Sicily, and having been accused of being a Christian, was cast into prison, by order of the Roman governor. Captivated by her extraordinary beauty, and desirous also of possessing himself of her immense fortune, he made use of a decree issued by the Emperor Decius against the Christians, and caused her to be imprisoned. He thought that by doing so, the lovely virgin would then be completely in his power. When the soldiers came to drag her off to prison, Agatha fell upon her knees, and said: "O Lord Jesus Christ, the Creator of all things, thou knowest the desire of my heart—be Thou my guide, and give me the strength to withstand the demands of this cruel tyrant. I belong to Thy fold, and I beseech Thee, by Thy great and glorious name, to assist me to trample Satan under my feet."

The governor knew how difficult a task he had before him, in attempting to turn from the path of virtue a Christian virgin like Agatha, and he therefore determined, if possible, to undermine gradually her devotion to the holy faith she had embraced. Thinking to accomplish his base purpose, he placed her in charge of an infamous woman, who had several daughters equally notorious living with her, and thus this tender lamb of the flock of Jesus Christ was obliged to associate with characters that were like the roaring lions spoken of in the Gospel, "who go about seeking whom they may devour."

In this den of vice was she forced to remain for the space of a month, and no means were left untried to induce her to enter upon a life of shame; but the holy virgin preferred death rather than compliance with their wicked demands. She placed herself in the hands of God, and found strength and consolation in prayer.

The governor was accordingly informed that it would be as easy to soften a rock as to bend the mind of Agatha to his will. He therefore had her brought into his presence, and told her that she should be severely punished, if she did not offer sacrifice to the gods; but the Christian maiden's only answer was:



"The Holy Ghost is with me, and will enable me to bear with courage any torment that you can devise."

She was then cast into prison, and threatened with the torture, if she would not consent to worship the idols. The next day she was again sent for by the governor, and asked if she had determined to obey his commands, and thus save her life. "My life belongs to Christ," was her answer; "and he is my salvation." "How foolishly you speak," said the governor. "Deny your faith, worship the gods, and sacrifice not your young life." "Deny rather your gods!" replied Agatha, "things that are made of stone and wood, and worship your Creator, the One true God, who made you out of nothing. If you despise His commands, your punishment will be terrible, and will endure for ever."

The governor now became very angry, and ordered her back to prison. His commands were that she should undergo the torture, and have one of her breasts cut off. Filled with horror at the idea of exposing her person, Agatha exclaimed: "Think, cruel tyrant, of your own mother, from whose breasts you received nourishment, before you compel me to submit to this shameful proceeding!" But he was deaf to her appeal, and she was obliged to suffer in obedience to his orders. Thus terribly mutilated, she was carried back to prison, and it is said that a bright light was observed in her cell during the night, and that the next morning her wounds were found to have been miraculously healed.

After four days had elapsed, she was again brought before the governor, but as she still refused to sacrifice to the gods, he commanded that she should be stripped of her clothing, and rolled over a piece of ground that had been covered for that purpose with broken fragments of glass and burning coals. During the execution of his order, an earthquake happened, and in his fright the governor sent word to the soldiers to desist from the further punishment of the pious virgin. Covered with wounds and scars, Agatha was led back to her dungeon, and raising her hands to heaven, she exclaimed: "O God, who didst create me, and hast preserved me from my childhood, who hast given me the strength to resist the wicked counsels of the world, and hast saved my body from pollution; who hast bestowed upon me patience to endure the tortures with which I have been punished, receive now my spirit, I implore Thee, for the time has come;" and, having uttered these words, she resigned her pure soul into the hands of her Heavenly Father.

The Christians who lived in the city assembled for the purpose of paying a proper respect to the remains of the youthful martyr, and while some were engaged in embalming her body, a youth was seen to enter the room, dressed in silken robes, and accompanied by a group of little children. He approached the body of the Saint, and placed at her head a tablet, upon which was inscribed the following words: "A holy virgin—Honor to God—Freedom to our country."

He disappeared as soon as the body was interred, and was never seen again, so that many persons believed him to have been the guardian angel of Agatha. Her last resting place was respected not only by the Christians, but by the Jews and pagans.

It has pleased Almighty God to honor the purity and fidelity of Agatha through many centuries. Two churches, bearing her name, have been erected in Rome. In Sicily, where her relics are still preserved, she is held in the greatest veneration, and she is the patroness of a Christian society entitled the "Knights of Malta." Some may perhaps question our right to venerate the relics of the Saints, but we will give an instance in which it is clearly proved that our doing so is pleasing to God. When the Saracens invaded Sicily, the relics of St. Agatha were taken to Constantinople, which city was then under the rule of a Christian emperor. At a later period, and some seven hundred years after her death, they were brought back to Sicily. Many people assembled to receive them, and it is positively asserted that the sick who called with confidence upon St. Agatha to assist them, were miraculously cured. Mauritius, who was at that time Bishop of Catania, in which city the relics were deposited, has left us an account of what then occurred. He says that "a girl, who was both lame and blind, was instantly cured by praying before the body of the Saint; that some who were possessed by evil spirits, and persons who had lost their reason, were restored to themselves by being brought into her presence. A dumb boy, whose mother had implored the intercession of St. Agatha, received the power of speech; and that many other remarkable cures took place upon those who, with a believing heart, asked for the prayers of the Christian martyr."

We may rest assured that we do nothing displeasing to God by honoring those whom He has Himself honored, and by venerating that which is pleasing in His sight. Want of veneration for the Saints of God, shows plainly a want of veneration for God Himself; for by showing honor to the tried friends of God we only honor Him. Those who love God sincerely, will love and endeavor to imitate the example of those who have distinguished themselves during their life-time by an unflinching adherence to the laws of God, and of His Holy Church; and he is no true Christian who does not venerate the purity, sublime courage, fidelity to God, and extraordinary fortitude of the saintly Agatha, who is now enjoying in heaven the reward of a life spent in the service of God. We will conclude this brief sketch of one of the greatest martyrs of the Church with the words of the Psalmist: "To me thy friends, O God, are made exceedingly venerable."

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## ST. DOROTHEA.

(February 6.)

ABOUT thirty years after the martyrdom of St. Agatha, another virgin by the name of Dorothea suffered a death very similar to that of the holy Agatha.

We gather the following facts concerning her life and manner of death, from a very old work which must have been written immediately after her martyrdom.

"In the Province of Cappadocia there lived a maiden called Dorothea, who served God in chastity, humility, and meekness. She fasted rigorously, and was fervent in her piety. She was endowed with extraordinary talents, and but few men could equal her in learning. All who knew her gave glory to God that He had a servant whose life was irreproachable, whose wisdom was unequaled, and whose purity was spotless."

The universal praise bestowed upon her and her reputation of being a most zealous Christian, having reached the governor, he summoned her to appear before the tribunal. He then told her that she must obey the command of the emperor, and sacrifice to the gods; but Dorothea's only answer was: "Almighty God, the ruler of heaven and of earth, has commanded me to serve Him alone, for it is written, 'The Lord thy God shalt thou adore, and Him only shalt thou serve.'" The governor hearing her speak thus, threatened to punish her with the greatest severity, and make of her an example to others. "I will be an example that will teach others to fear God, and not men, who are full of wickedness," said the heroic virgin. "I see that you will not renounce your foolish faith," replied the governor, "and that you are determined to die for it, as others have done before you; but listen to what I say: comply with the emperor's order and you shall not be subjected to the torture." "They will be but fleeting pains," answered Dorothea, "but the torments of those who are in hell endure for ever. I shall not incur the wrath of God for fear of any temporal affliction, because He has said: 'Fear ye not them that kill the body, and are not able to kill the soul; but rather fear him that can destroy both soul and body in hell.'"

Finding expostulations useless, the governor ordered her to be stretched upon the rack. "Do your work quickly," said the undaunted Christian, "so that I may soon behold the countenance of Him for whose sake I die." "Who is it that you desire to see so earnestly?" asked the governor. "Jesus Christ, the Son of God!" was the answer. "Where is Christ?" again questioned the governor. "As God, He is everywhere," replied Dorothea; "but when He became the Son of man and died for the sins of the world, He ascended into



heaven, where He sitteth at the right hand of the Father, and is equal with the Father and Holy Ghost. Into this paradise of eternal joy will He receive those who have been faithful to Him."

Dorothea had two sisters who, for fear of being put to death, had consented to offer sacrifice to the idols, and in the hope that she too might yield, the governor had her placed with her apostate sisters. When she entered their presence one of them said to her: "Do as we have done, Dorothea, and escape the torture with which you are threatened. It is only reasonable that you should avoid punishment and an unnatural death." In reply to their remonstrance, Dorothea said: "Oh! that my words would create within you a sincere sorrow for the sin you have committed in having offered sacrifice before false gods. Turn to the one true God again, and He will forgive you, for He is full of mercy and loving kindness." "We have renounced our belief in Him," said one of the sisters, "how then can we return?" "To despair of His mercy is a greater sin than to have bowed down before the idols," replied Dorothea; "therefore have confidence in the skill and wisdom of the great Physician, for He can heal your wounds. He is called the Saviour because He can save, and the Redeemer because he has redeemed mankind. Repent, therefore, of your sins, and you will obtain pardon for what you have done."

The two sisters, convinced of their wickedness in having forsaken the true religion, threw themselves in tears at the feet of the pious Dorothea, and begged her to intercede with God in their behalf. Raising her hands to heaven, the Saint said: "Thou who desirest not the death of a sinner, O Lord, but rather that he be converted and live, be merciful to my poor sisters, whom the devil tempted to renounce their faith in Thee. O Lord Jesus Christ, receive back into Thy fold these stray sheep, that by their example those who have also fallen away, may return again; for Thou hast said that there is more joy in heaven over one sinner doing penance, than over ninety and nine just, who need not penance."

Meanwhile the governor sent for the three sisters to appear before him, but the two upon whom he had relied as the means of Dorothea's conversion now declared their sorrow for having offered sacrifice to false gods, and their return to the faith they had forsworn, and their willingness also to die for Christ. Filled with rage, the governor commanded that the two sisters should be tied together and burned alive. With joy they heard their sentence, and met their fate courageously. Dorothea was then placed upon a rack, beaten with burning rods, and after undergoing many other tortures, finally put to death by the sword.

In reading the lives of the Saints and martyrs, we do not fail to admire their courage and fidelity; but then we think to ourselves, "they could not have acted otherwise—we would have done the same;" but we deceive ourselves, for we little know our own weakness when threatened with either death or dis-

honor. It is very natural for us to think of death if we are stretched upon a bed of sickness, but when in the full vigor of health death looks us in the face, it requires strength from heaven to enable us to make our choice between a life granted to us on condition that we offend God, and a terrible death; although certain of being afterwards received into the company of the Saints. Strong men, when sentenced to die, have wept, and begged for their lives, willing to make any sacrifice in order to prolong their days. Think how often we have been tempted to commit sin for the gratification of a moment, and then consider if we should be able to resist committing it again, if life or death were held in the balance. We should therefore never be too confident of ourselves, but like the holy martyrs, beg God to assist us in our time of need.

In the life of Dorothea we see plainly how the Holy Ghost comforts and upholds those who desire to serve God. As long as she lived secluded from the world, He gave her the grace to lead a pious and exemplary life; but when brought before the tribunal, He endowed her with supernatural strength. Her answers in reply to the governor were full of wisdom and truth. Instead of fearing the torture and death, she rejoiced at having it in her power to suffer for Christ; and instead of being persuaded by the example of her sisters to abjure her holy religion, she rekindled within their hearts the dying embers of their faith, so that both were converted from the error of their ways and died martyrs. When all is at peace in the heart of man, the influence of the Holy Spirit is like that of soft and beautiful light shining upon him; but when temptation comes the light increases until it absorbs everything around it, that is to say the more we rely upon God in time of need, the greater will be the assistance He bestows upon us. A Christian, when ill and suffering, is astonished sometimes at the patience with which he can endure the most agonizing pains, but it is the effect of the Holy Ghost working within him. There have been many good men who could not bear when in health even to meditate upon death, but when the hour came for them to die, have yielded up their spirits with joy and resignation; the Holy Ghost enabling them to overcome their dread of death, and filling their hearts with peace and confidence.

But to be thought worthy of receiving these wonderful gifts, we must be careful to live in constant communion with God. Let us therefore resolve, dear reader, to beg of Almighty God the grace to serve Him with all our mind and heart, so that when affliction comes upon us we shall recognize the hand which sent it, and when the hour of death approaches, we shall feel ourselves upheld by the strong arm of faith. Let us pray that when our eyes close upon the scenes of this life, they may open upon the never ending joys of the world to come.

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## ST. ROMNALD.

(February 7.)

*"Gifts of the Holy Ghost."*

IN reading the lives of the Saints, we see plainly that it was the Holy Ghost who gave them courage to perform acts of such extraordinary heroism; for all holiness proceeds from Him. The Saints are like rain-drops upon which the sun shines, causing them to reflect back various bright and dazzling colors; because all that we admire in their actions, are but the effects of the Holy Ghost, who, like a great spiritual Sun, gives beauty and variety to their lives. The different Saints of God constitute as it were a garden, from which we can always gather something that is fragrant and beautiful. Let us see what effect the Holy Ghost produced in the soul of Romnald, whose life we will now place before you.

Romnald was the son of an Italian duke, and his youth was spent more in the service of the world than in that of God. His father having challenged a relative to mortal combat, insisted upon Romnald being present. The sight of his cousin lying dead upon the field, made such an impression upon the soul of Romnald that he determined to enter a convent, and do penance there for the space of forty days. At the end of that time his intention was to return to the world, and to resume his former mode of life; but when kneeling in the chapel before the Blessed Sacrament, the Holy Ghost kindled within his heart the fire of divine love. He wept bitterly for the sins he had committed in his past life, and begged the monks, upon his knees, to receive him as an inmate of their convent; so that from being a frivolous youth he became a most pious and exemplary servant of God. The desire to lead a life of even greater austerity than that practiced by the good monks, however, increased daily in his heart, and at last he obtained the permission of his superior to live with a holy hermit, whose hermitage was near Venice, and together they led a life of strict seclusion, spending their time in prayer and meditation. But the devil is always at work, and in the beginning many temptations assailed the soul of the youthful Romnald. The evil one placed before the eyes of the Saint dazzling visions of what he might have become, if he had remained in the service of the world—that, as the son of noble parents, every earthly honor was within his grasp, and that instead of using his immense wealth for his own advantage, ungrateful relatives would squander it away. Satan even tried to impress upon the heart of Romnald the folly of doing penance while still so young, and that it would be impossible for him to continue leading such a life. Finding himself becoming more and more inclined to listen to the voice of the tempter, Romnald fell upon his knees, and said: "O Lord Jesus, why hast thou forsaken me, and left me so completely in the power of my enemies?" when at once the tempta-



tions vanished, and his heart became so filled with the fire of divine love, that every other feeling was consumed within him.

When elected to the office of Abbot, he declined, out of humility, to accept the proffered dignity, although urged to do so by the Emperor Otto. He continued firm in his refusal, until threatened with the displeasure of the Bishops of the Church then assembled in council at Ravenna. As Abbot, he strictly enforced the rules of the order, and met with opposition from some discontented inmates of the convent. He therefore resigned the office, and retired into his former seclusion, where he was afterwards joined by men of rank and learning, who desired, with him as their leader, to seek and find the kingdom of heaven. Under his watchful care many of them attained great sanctity, and some who were sent as missionaries among the heathens, confessed their faith in Christ by dying as martyrs.

In the loneliness of his cell, and by the help of God, the holy Romnald finally reached perfection. He foretold many things that afterwards happened. All that seems dark and incomprehensible to our eyes, when reading the sacred Scriptures, was made clear to him, and he enjoyed, as it were, a foretaste of the joys prepared for him in the eternal kingdom of God.

A certain Bishop frequently told Romnald that it was wrong for him to live in such strict retirement, and that by emerging from his seclusion he would be enabled to convert many souls to God, but that now he was hiding his "light under a bushel." The Saint followed the advice given by the pious Bishop, and changed his place of residence in order that he might labor in another portion of our Lord's vineyard. A wealthy nobleman who was living in a state of mortal sin once offered Romnald a valuable gift, but the Saint declined accepting it, for, said he: "I should thereby be a participator in your sin." The count afterwards confessed that the angry looks of no monarch had ever terrified him as much as the countenance of Romnald did at this time, and that the excuses he intended offering for his conduct, died away upon his lips.

Romnald continued to practice the greatest austerities, even when advanced in years. To us it would seem almost impossible to persevere for such a length of time in the performance of such acts of self-denial, so that it need not astonish us to hear that there were many even in those days who did not believe that any one could look as cheerful and happy as St. Romnald did, and yet deny themselves the so-called pleasures of the world. But many miracles that happened during the life time of the Saint attest to his sanctity, and the fact of his prayers being acceptable before the throne of God. One person was cured by the Saint breathing upon him, another by following the advice given him, a third by eating some bread that had been blessed by the Saint; besides many other cases where persons were freed from the power of the devil.

Henry emperor of Germany, once visited Italy, and expressed a desire to see St. Romnald, and he was accordingly sent for in obedience to the royal

command. He at first refused to comply with the emperor's request, until urged to do so by some of his pupils, who told him that the emperor would doubtless bestow upon him some gift, and that as they were very much crowded for room in their present convent, he could ask for a larger house. The Saint, therefore, went to see the emperor, and after conversing with him for some time, Henry said: "O would that my soul were in your body." When Romnald presented his petition, the emperor willingly granted his request, and gave him an extensive building for the use of his scholars.

St. Romnald was the founder of the order of Camoldolenseans, who, like the Trappists, lead a life of penance, prayer, and silence. It would be the height of folly for us to imagine that because these holy monks mortify their passions, they must on that account be unhappy; on the contrary, in proportion as the fire of concupiscence is extinguished within us, does the Holy Ghost fill our hearts and minds with His seven-fold gifts of "wisdom, understanding, counsel, fortitude, knowledge, piety, and the fear of God."

After a life spent in good works, in building convents, and in directing souls to God, the venerable Romnald felt that his end was approaching. He had a cell prepared for himself in a remote part of the convent, in order, if possible, to be more alone with God, and there yielded up his pure soul into the hands of his Creator, after having attained the great age of one hundred and twenty years. The evening before his death (February 7th, 1032) he told two lay-brothers, who were in attendance upon him, to leave him alone in his cell. They at first were unwilling to do so, fearing that he might die, but finally yielded to his entreaties, taking care, however, to remain near the door of his cell. Becoming alarmed at the strange silence, they entered, and found Romnald lying dead. The Saint had twenty years previously foretold the manner of his death, and his biographer says in conclusion that "he who can predict the hour of his death, will obtain also the object of his life." We in the world desire to be surrounded by sympathizing friends in times of sickness and calamity, but the holy Romnald, like a true Christian, knew and felt that he was never less lonely than when alone with God.

## BLESSED JEROME EMILIAN,

CALLED BY THE CHURCH

"THE FATHER OF THE POOR."

(February 8.)

"Best work of Charity."

JEROME EMILIAN was born in the city of Venice, in the year 1481, and belonged to a family of high rank. He received an excellent and Christian

education, and when very young, displayed extraordinary powers of mind. When he had reached his fifteenth year, the French invaded Venice and Italy. Jerome, therefore, thought it his duty to enter the army, and to assist in repelling the invaders from his native city; but constant association with men of loose character, such as generally constitute an army, produced its effect upon him, and he soon contracted bad habits. From the natural gaiety of his disposition, he became a great favorite with his comrades, and was very often the leader in their sports and wicked pleasures. His pious mother and brothers frequently remonstrated with him for his unchristian manner of life, but with no good result; and he would have proceeded to commit even greater excesses, were it not for the hope that he had of obtaining a distinguished position in the army.

But the hand of God was now stretched forth to stay him in his downward course, for while in command of a division, whose duty it was to defend the city, Jerome was taken prisoner, and the obstinacy with which he had conducted its defense, caused him to be treated by his captors with the greatest cruelty. He was heavily ironed, placed in a dark dungeon, and threatened with immediate execution. In the loneliness of his cell he meditated upon the manifold sins of his past life, and what the tears and exhortations of his virtuous mother failed to accomplish, now took place in his soul—his heart was filled with sorrow for having so often offended God. It was not the fear of death, however, that caused this great change to take place in him, but the dread of the judgment after death. The fact of his being a prisoner was forgotten, and his only grief was in having so repeatedly abused the mercy of God. His fear was that Almighty God would not forgive him for what he had done; but he did not dream that his horror for sin, and his sincere desire to do penance, were the effects of God's grace working in him. While in this state of mind, it occurred to him to ask the Blessed Mother of God to help him in his necessity. He therefore threw himself upon his knees, and implored her, as the "Refuge of sinners," to intercede in his behalf with her divine Son, and to obtain for him forgiveness of his sins, and peace of mind; when suddenly the gloom of the dungeon was illumined by a bright and dazzling light, and the Blessed Virgin appeared before the astonished eyes of the dejected Jerome, announcing to him the glad tidings of forgiveness. At first he thought that his senses were deceiving him; but when he found himself outside of the prison gates, and the fetters stricken from his hands and feet, then did he recognize the tender mercy and loving kindness of his Heavenly Father, in bestowing upon him such wonderful marks of favor, and his own unworthiness to receive them. He made a solemn vow to serve God for the future, and by the grace of God he faithfully kept that promise until the hour of his death. Instead of the magnificent apparel he once wore, he was habited in garments of the plainest description; his former haughtiness gave place to the Christian virtues of humility and meekness; he went regularly to Mass, and his only effort now seemed to be to retrieve the lost time spent in the



service of the devil. The most intense love filled his heart for the "Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world," and his horror of sin increased in proportion. He avoided the company of wicked persons, and associated only with those who were known to lead a Christian life, in order to strengthen himself in his efforts to become a good and virtuous man. He chose as a director a most holy and exemplary priest, whose advice in spiritual matters he implicitly followed.

The large sums of money which he had formerly squandered upon himself, he now devoted to the support of the poor, and especially for the relief of those who were ashamed to make known their poverty. Many poor girls who would otherwise have become the prey of bad men, were endowed by him with a certain sum of money in order that they might have no excuse for sin. He fasted rigorously, and allowed himself but little sleep, so that his unruly passions might not obtain the mastery over him. He spent his time in prayer, in reading books of devotion, in working, and in visiting the sick and afflicted. Before his conversion he had given way to ungovernable bursts of temper, but now that the grace of God had penetrated his whole being, he showed himself full of meekness and humility.

A great famine visited the city where he resided; and his charity was so unbounded that the poor would assemble around his door, just as the bees swarm about a flower from which they wish to extract honey. When he had spent all that he possessed in order to relieve the common distress that had fallen upon the land, he sold his jewels, his costly furniture, and even his clothes, for the benefit of those to whom he had no money to give, and his example in this respect was followed by many other wealthy inhabitants of the city.

The people had hardly recovered from the effects of the famine, when a terrible pestilence broke out among them. While in the exercise of his pious work of visiting the sick, Jerome was stricken down with the disease, but it pleased Almighty God to raise him up from the bed of sickness, and the blessed Jerome looked upon his recovery as if it were the beginning of a new life. He therefore made a firm resolution to devote the remainder of his days to the service of God, and to the welfare of his fellow men, and he begged God to make known to him the way in which he might best accomplish his design. Before long he commenced his holy work of providing shelter, food, and clothes for the hundreds of little children who had been made orphans by the plague. He caused a large house to be fitted up for that purpose, and received into it the naked and hungry little wanderers whose souls and bodies had been so long neglected. The boys were taught trades, so as to enable them to provide for themselves after leaving the asylum, and no means were spared by him to bring up his adopted children in the fear and love of God. They began and ended the day by recommending themselves to the care of their Heavenly Father, and were obliged to attend Mass before commencing their work. They were taught to read and

write, and were well instructed in their religion. Those who were old enough confessed their sins regularly once a month. It was a most edifying sight to see a man of his wealth and position devoting himself to the Christian education and bodily welfare of so many little ones, who might otherwise have grown up ignorant of God. He went with them to church, accompanied them in their walks, and was always dressed in the plainest manner. His excellent management of the asylum won for him the admiration of the people, and he frequently received large contributions to aid him in supporting the little ones whom he had gathered around him.

It was his desire to extend his usefulness, and to found in other cities institutions similar to the one he had established in Venice; and to attain this object he gave the charge of the asylum over into the hands of competent persons, and then went to Verona. There he discovered that famine and pestilence had made many children orphans, but he at once collected them together; and as he had already given his fortune to the poor in Venice, he was at first obliged to go about and beg for the daily support of the children. Soon, however, the example of one like Jerome, who was known to have sacrificed all that he had, out of love for God and the poor, made such an impression upon the citizens that they sent him sums of money, and gifts came pouring in from all sides. Legacies were bequeathed to him for the benefit of the institution, and some pious persons even gave houses, whose rent was to be used for the support of the orphans. Thus Jerome obtained not only pecuniary aid for the carrying out of his charitable purposes, but the still more welcome assistance of good men, some of them noblemen, who, animated by his example, determined to devote their lives to the service and Christian education of poor and forsaken children.

Three centuries have passed away since the Blessed Jerome lived and labored for the honor of God; and although the time and scene of his charities seem so far from us, yet like the sun, who, separated from the earth by millions of miles, nevertheless causes all that is bright and beautiful in nature to burst forth, so also is the influence of Jerome's example felt even to the present day.

If we wish to please God, dear reader, we can do nothing that will make us dearer to His sacred heart than for us to take into our families a little destitute child, to treat it kindly, and to instruct it in the religion of Christ. How many are there who have no children, or else have given them back to God, who, by the sacrifice of a little time and money, could draw down upon themselves the richest blessings of Heaven. See what the Blessed Jerome did; he sacrificed not a little, but all of his vast fortune, and gave the whole of his time to the service of hundreds of orphans. Let us therefore resolve, if not able to assume the entire support of a poor child, to give as liberally as possible towards the support of orphan asylums, for our Saviour has said: "Amen I say to you, as long as you did it to one of these my least brethren, you did it to me."

## ST. NICEPHORUS.

(February 9.)

"Forgiveness."

ST. NICEPHORUS was a man of God, and became warmly attached to a priest by the name of Sapritius. They were so constantly together that many persons imagined them to be brothers; but at length a dispute arose between them, and when they met they no longer recognized one another. How true it is that God is the only being upon whose friendship man can confidently rely. This unhappy state of feeling between the former friends lasted for some time, when Nicephorus recalled to his mind the words of St. John: "Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer." He therefore begged the relatives of Sapritius to effect, if possible, a reconciliation between himself and the priest, and declared his willingness to ask pardon of Sapritius, who, as a priest, should have been the first to extend the hand of friendship; but Sapritius haughtily refused to receive his advances. This rebuff, however, did not deter Nicephorus from making another attempt, but the second failed as signally as did the first. He then resolved to go himself to the house of Sapritius, which he did, and having entered his presence, threw himself upon his knees before the priest, and exclaimed: "Forgive me, I conjure you in the name of the Lord;" but Sapritius turned from him and for the third time rejected his advances.

Just at this time, two hundred and fifty years after Christ, a persecution commenced against the Christians, by order of the emperor Valerian; the soldiers therefore went about in every direction searching for them, and among those whom they found was Sapritius.

He was taken before the governor, in whose presence he confessed himself to be not only a Christian, but a priest; he said also that the idols were false gods, and were without power; but that Jesus Christ was the one true God whom they were bound to worship. When the governor heard him speak thus, he ordered him to be stretched upon a rack as a punishment; but Sapritius endured the pains with firmness, and finding that he would not offer sacrifice to the gods, the governor sentenced him to be beheaded.

Nicephorus hearing what had happened, determined to see Sapritius before he was executed, for he could not endure the thought of being at enmity with one who was about to become a martyr for the cause of Christ. He accordingly placed himself in the way through which Sapritius would be obliged to pass, and when he saw him approaching he threw himself at his feet and implored his forgiveness; but Sapritius refused to be reconciled even when death was so near, and the martyr's crown almost in his possession. Bathed in tears, Nicephorus rose from his knees and followed him, crying out for pardon, but Sapritius remained hardened, and the heathens laughed at Nicephorus for asking any



thing from a man who was about to die, and who therefore could not harm him. "You know not what I ask from this martyr," said Nicephorus. "God alone knows."

Although Sapritius had confessed himself to be a Christian, and had submitted to the torture, he nevertheless denied the faith by refusing to forgive Nicephorus. Martyrdom itself could not have opened heaven to him, for St. Paul says distinctly in his first Epistle to the Corinthians, Chapter 13: "If I should distribute all my goods to feed the poor, and if I should deliver my body to be burned, and have no charity, it profiteth me nothing."

Almighty God, however, did not permit Sapritius to appear even before the eyes of men in the holy character of a martyr. For as he refused to die in peace with his neighbor, God withdrew from him the grace of final perseverance. Arrived at the place of execution, he was told to kneel down in order to receive the fatal stroke; but terrified at the sight of the executioner, Sapritius exclaimed: "Why must I die?" "Because you will not sacrifice to the gods," was the answer. "I ask pardon for what I have done," cried out the unhappy man, "and I am willing to obey the commands of the emperor."

Nicephorus, who was present and heard the words spoken by Sapritius, was filled with sorrow at hearing Christ denied, and fearing that Sapritius might be eternally lost, he called out to him to remain firm in the cause of Jesus Christ; but Sapritius refused to listen to his voice. Nicephorus wishing to give honor to God, now said to the soldiers: "I am a Christian and will never offer sacrifice to false gods. Let me suffer therefore instead of Sapritius."

Every one was astonished at his courage, and the judges sent word to the governor of what had occurred; the result was, that an order came for the immediate execution of Nicephorus, and he was accordingly beheaded.

Thus we see how Almighty God rewarded the virtuous Nicephorus for his perfect faith, humility, and charity, by bestowing upon him the crown of martyrdom.

It is not known what became of Sapritius. Some accounts say that he was set at liberty, but others positively assert that he was after all put to death.

What we find so commendable in the life of Nicephorus, is the spirit of charity and humility which tempted him to make so many efforts to be reconciled with his enemy. It was these two virtues especially that made him so pleasing in the sight of Him who, when hanging upon the cross, begged the eternal Father to forgive those who had persecuted Him and put Him to death.

It would be as easy for us to comprehend the greatness and majesty of God, as for us to hold in our hands heaven and earth; but this God whom the Angels adore and fear, we daily offend, and have offended since the world began. Our sins, like dark clouds, ascend to heaven, but He still has patience with us. The thought of being reconciled to Him hardly enters our minds, before He stretches

forth His hand to help us in our efforts to walk in the path of virtue. We have never received any thing but benefits from Him. "For God so loved the world, as to give His only begotten Son; that whosoever believeth in Him, may not perish, but may have life everlasting." (John, 3 : 16.)

What God did for all mankind, He does yet for every sinner. We know ourselves that we never commit a sin without our conscience telling us that we have offended God, and it is a proof of His love for us that He has implanted in our souls this perception of good from evil. The sinner is exhorted to amend his life when he listens to a sermon, when he reads a religious book, and by the example of a good Christian; but if he still remains insensible to these means of conversion, Almighty God endeavors to reach his heart by taking from him some relative or cherished friend; and if these warnings fail, then comes the sorrowful time of Lent, when he is told to meditate upon what the Son of Man suffered for the sins of the world; and afterwards the joyful season of Easter, when, if he complies with the regulations of the Church, his sins are buried, and he rises from the grave of sin.

We see, therefore, that the merciful God places it completely in our power either to please or to offend Him; if we forsake Him, He follows us, beseeching us to return. Let it not be said of us, as was said of the Jews: "I have spread forth my hands all the day to an unbelieving people." (Isaias, 65 : 2.)

What Nicephorus did, every Christian is bound to do, that is, to seek forgiveness of those whom he has offended; for nothing is so detestable in the sight of God as an unforgiving heart. We think, in our arrogance, that God should forgive us the moment that we ask for pardon; but if any one offends us, we feel that our dignity has been insulted, and that it would be unbecoming in us to make the first advances. By acting in this manner, we show that we consider ourselves superior to God, for we expect Him to do things that we refuse to do ourselves. Remember the words of the Holy Scriptures: "If any man hath not the spirit of Christ, he is none of His."

Let us therefore resolve to cultivate in our hearts this spirit of love and humility, and to put aside for ever the desire of revenge—for it is Satan who prompts us to indulge in thoughts of vengeance upon our enemies, and by listening to his voice we become his children, instead of "heirs of the kingdom of heaven."

• When we repeat the Lord's prayer, we say: "Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us;" so that we declare before God, our willingness to suffer eternally, unless we forgive "those who have trespassed against us;" and our Saviour adds: "If you will forgive men their offenses, your heavenly Father will forgive you also your offenses. But if you will not forgive men, neither will your Father forgive you your offenses." (Matt. 7 : 14-15.)

## ST. SCHOLASTICA.

(February 10.)

"Pious Conversation,"

THERE once lived in Italy a pious couple to whom Almighty God denied the blessing of children; but as they were very desirous to have a child they prayed fervently, and gave alms to the poor in order to obtain what they asked for. What they did was pleasing in the sight of heaven, for in answer to their petition the mother gave birth to twins, a son and a daughter, who received in baptism the names of Benedict and Scholastica.

The piety of the parents descended upon the children, for both in after years became distinguished for the virtues of prayer, alms-giving, and chastity. St. Benedict afterwards founded the great Benedictine Order, and his twin sister, Scholastica, led a pious and secluded life, never going out except to visit her brother, St. Benedict, who had established a convent in Mount Cassino, of which he was Superior.

The desire of Scholastica in thus visiting her brother, was to receive from him instruction as to the manner in which she could best serve God. But as it was against the rule for a female to enter the convent, Benedict came down from the mountain, and met his sister at some appointed spot, where they would converse for hours upon religious subjects. In obedience to the advice received from her saintly brother, Scholastica resolved to build a cell, in which she lived for some time. Animated by her example, other holy virgins assembled around her, so that she too became the foundress of a religious order.

After many years spent in the service of God, the holy Scholastica felt that her end was approaching, and in order to see her beloved brother once more, she had herself carried to the house where they usually met, which was at some distance from the convent, and then sent word to him that she had arrived there. Accompanied by some of his fellow monks, Benedict hastened to meet her. What happened at their last interview upon earth we find recorded in the writings of the holy Pope Gregory the Great, who says: "One day St. Scholastica went to see her brother, St. Benedict, who with some of his monks came to meet her at the usual place. Their whole time was spent in conversing upon religious subjects, and in praising God. In the evening they partook of some slight refreshment, and as night had fallen, Scholastica entreated her brother to remain with her until the next day, as she knew that she would never see him again, and she desired to continue speaking with him upon the joys of heaven. 'What is it that you ask of me, my sister?' replied the holy Benedict; 'do you not know that my rule forbids me to absent myself from the convent for any length of time?' The heavens were bright and clear, and not a cloud was to be seen, but when Scholastica heard her brother's



refusal, she placed her clasped hands upon the table, and bending her head down upon them, offered up a prayer to Almighty God, and instantaneously the sky darkened, and terrific thunder and lightning burst forth, so that it was impossible for Benedict and his companions to return to their convent that night. His heart was filled with grief on that account, and he said to his sister: 'May God forgive you, Scholastica, for what you have done.' But she replied: 'You would not listen to my entreaties, and I therefore implored Almighty God to keep you with me, and He has heard my prayer.' In humble submission to the will of God, the pious brother remained with his sister, and the night was spent as the day had been, in consoling one another, and in speaking upon the greatness and goodness of God. The next morning the dying Scholastica was carried back to her cell, and Benedict returned to his convent. But on the third day, while he was standing at a window looking up at the heavens, he saw in a vision the soul of his saintly sister leaving her body, and in the form of a dove ascending into heaven. He rejoiced at the glory she had attained, and gave thanks to God for having taken her to Himself. After announcing her death to the other monks, he sent for her body, and had it buried in the grave in which he was himself afterwards laid. Thus it happened that the brother and sister, whose spirits had always been united in God, were not separated even in the grave."

In St. Scholastica we find one whose only delight was to speak of God, and upon religious matters. That her conversation was pleasing to God is sufficiently proved by the miraculous manner in which He answered her prayer, that her holy brother might remain with her in order that she might continue to converse with him upon the never-ending joys of heaven. In proportion as she spoke of God did her love for Him increase. She was often heard to say: "Either keep silent or speak of God, for nothing in the world is worth speaking of."

We can generally judge of a man or of a woman by their conversation; if they speak of nothing but money, politics, trade, balls, fine dresses, or else of their neighbors, slandering them in their absence, then rest assured that there is no love of God within their hearts, for "out of the fullness of the heart the mouth speaketh."

When do we ever hear in what is called fashionable society the name of God mentioned? It is an unusual thing to hear His holy name spoken with love and reverence either among the rich or the poor, and the man is looked upon as a very odd person who speaks of nothing but God. There are even some persons who in places of public resort mock at the ministers of God, and use scandalous language when speaking of persons consecrated to His service; but let them beware, for our Lord has said in reference to His priests: "He that despiseth you, despiseth me, and he that despiseth me, despiseth him that sent me."

Let us therefore, dear reader, cultivate in ourselves, and in others, the habit

of conversing upon pious subjects. By doing so we shall find that our faith will be strengthened, and our love for God daily increase. The holy name of Jesus, spoken with reverence, has often enkindled in the hearts of some men the divine love that was almost extinguished. We should take pains to encourage in others the desire to speak of God, and of our holy faith. Our religion, however, must not consist in talking alone, for there are some persons who speak constantly of God, but nevertheless dishonor Him by the way in which they live. Let us endeavor as true Christians to please God in all that we say and do. The learned pagan writer, Cicero, says that "a man should always hold himself in such a manner, that at any moment a beautiful statue could be formed of him."

As Christians, therefore, let us resolve to say or do nothing of which we shall be ashamed at the last great day, when the secrets of all hearts will be unveiled, and all idle words accounted for before the throne of God. "By thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned."

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## ST. EUPIROSYNE.

(February 11.)

"Giving up all things for Christ"

THE following sketch of the life of St. Euphrosyne is taken from a work printed three hundred and fifty years ago:

"Euphrosyne was the only child of a very wealthy Christian who lived in the city of Alexandria. Her father was in the habit of visiting quite frequently the pious Abbot of a neighboring convent, and when Euphrosyne was about eighteen years of age, he once took her with him to see his friend the Abbot. When the old priest entered the room, her father said to him: 'Here is the child who was granted to me in answer to thy prayers: bestow upon her thy blessing, for I shall soon give her in marriage.' The holy Abbot gave Euphrosyne his blessing, exhorted her to lead a virtuous life, and to live in the fear of God. They were invited by the Abbot to remain in the convent for three days, and during that time Euphrosyne witnessed the unaffected piety of the good monks, and in speaking of them to her father, she exclaimed: 'Blessed are they who even in this life are like the angels, and who in the world to come will obtain life everlasting.'

"When they were about leaving the convent, Euphrosyne knelt before the Abbot, and said: 'Intercede with God in my behalf, I pray thee, that my soul may be saved;' and placing his hands upon her head the Abbot blessed her, saying: 'May the Eternal Father, who knoweth all things, bless and preserve

thee in this life, and grant thee a participation in the joys of the world to come.'

"At the end of another year the Abbot sent one of the brethren on a message to the house of Pafnutius, the father of Euphrosyne, but he was not at home, and the daughter received the good brother. While conversing with him upon different subjects, Euphrosyne asked how many Religious lived in the convent. 'Three hundred and twenty-two,' was the reply. 'And will any youth be permitted to enter who desires to lead a holy life?' said Euphrosyne. 'Yes,' answered the brother, 'he is always admitted; for our holy Abbot is mindful of the command of Christ in which He says: 'All that the Father giveth me, shall come to me, and him that cometh to me I will not cast out.' 'Do you all follow the same rules?' again questioned Euphrosyne. 'We all live according to one rule,' replied the brother. 'How I wish that I could also spend my life in the service of God,' said Euphrosyne; 'but my father has determined to give me in marriage, for the sake of increasing his worldly possessions.' When the pious brother heard her make this avowal, he counseled her to remain true to the Bridegroom whom she had chosen, and on no account to violate her vow of chastity. Her heart from this moment became filled with joy, and she determined to become a Religious. But while meditating upon the subject, she thought to herself: 'If I enter a convent of nuns my father will discover my retreat, and he will then compel me to return home, so that even against my will I shall be obliged to marry. I will therefore disguise myself as a man, and seek in a monastery that peace which I cannot find in the world, for my father will never imagine that I have become a brother.'

"She accordingly dressed herself in male attire, left her home, and concealed herself during the night. When the day dawned, she entered a church, and after recommending herself to Almighty God, she proceeded to the convent, where she sent word by the gatekeeper to the Abbot that a youth was waiting to see him. The good Abbot came at once, and after a kind greeting, said: 'What can I do for you, my son?' 'I have always desired to be a Religious,' was her reply; 'and having heard of your kindness, I have come to remain with you, if you will permit me to become an inmate of the convent.' 'You are welcome,' answered the good priest; 'examine our rules, and if you still wish to remain among us, you can do so; but what is your name?' 'Smaragdus,' replied the supposed youth. 'You are still very young,' said the unsuspecting Abbot, 'and will need some one to guide you in your studies, and to explain to you the rules of the Order.' 'I am willing to obey you in any thing,' said Smaragdus. The Abbot therefore recommended a learned monk, by the name of Agapitus, to take the new comer under his charge, and he told Smaragdus that his wish was to see the pupil equal to the teacher in all things.

"When Pafnutius returned home, he inquired for his daughter, but his servants declared that they had not seen her. Filled with anxiety, he commanded



them to search for her in every direction, and sent word to his intended son-in-law that Euphrosyne was missing. The young man and his father immediately repaired to the house of the afflicted Pafnutius, and mingled their tears with his. Messengers were ordered to leave no place unsearched in the city or throughout Egypt, and accordingly in the convents of nuns, in the houses of friends, in caves, and in every imaginable place, was the missing daughter sought for, but in vain.

"Desiring to be comforted in his great sorrow, Pafnutius went to see the Abbot, and said to him: 'Desist not in your prayers, my Father, until I see my beloved child again, for I know not what has become of her!' Moved to compassion at the sight of his grief, the Abbot called together the inmates of the convent, and told them to pray earnestly for the return of his dear friend's daughter. In a few days, Pafnutius came back to the convent, and when the Abbot entered the room, he fell prostrate at his feet, and cried out with a despairing voice: 'Pray to God for me, my Father, that he may come to my assistance, for my heart will break, and every hour my distress increases.' The good Abbot endeavored to console the afflicted parent, and after speaking with him for some time, said that he would send for a very pious brother, who could comfort and pray for him. Pafnutius consented to see the brother. The Abbot accordingly sent for Agapitus, and told him to lead Pafnutius to the cell of Brother Smaragdus; for the Abbot did not dream that Euphrosyne and Smaragdus were one and the same person. When her father entered her cell, Euphrosyne knew him in an instant, and burst into tears; but Pafnutius thought that she only wept because she saw him in trouble, as it was impossible for him to recognize in the pale and wasted features of a Brother the once blooming and beautiful Euphrosyne. She fell upon her knees, and offered up a silent prayer to God for strength, and then sat down by her father. She spoke to him about the joys of heaven, and told him that he should love God, and submit to His holy will in all things. She reminded him also of what St. Paul says: 'That tribulation worketh patience, and patience trial, and trial hope.' Before he left her, she said to him: 'Almighty God will hear your prayer concerning your child, and if she were in any danger He would reveal it to you; but I feel confident that she is in some holy place.' When Pafnutius rejoined the Abbot, he told him that he had not felt so happy since his daughter had left him, and thanked God for the conversation he had enjoyed with the pious brother Smaragdus, whom he afterwards came regularly to see.

"Euphrosyne had lived for thirty-eight years in the convent, when she felt the hand of death laid upon her. Having called as usual to see her, Pafnutius was taken to her cell, but when he saw her so ill, he exclaimed: 'You have often comforted me by your sweet words, and promised me that I should yet see my daughter; but I have no longer any hope, for when you die I shall be left alone in the world!' And bursting into tears, the old man kissed the brow of the

dying Religious. Wishing to console her father for the last time, Euphrosyne said to him: 'Do not complain, for nothing is impossible with God: cease therefore to grieve, and think of Jacob who mourned for his son as for one dead, but who afterwards found him alive and well. Stay with me until I die, I pray you.'

"On the third day Pafnutius said: 'I have kept my promise, Smaragdus, and have not left you.' Then Euphrosyne knew that the time had come for her to reveal herself to her father, as she felt herself sinking rapidly. Turning to him, she exclaimed: 'It has pleased Almighty God to bestow upon me the grace of final perseverance, and I shall now obtain the crown of victory. I will redeem my promise, and tell you where your daughter can be found, for I am Euphrosyne, and you are my dear father. Do not betray my secret to any one in the convent, father, and when I am dead let no one prepare my body for burial but yourself.' With these words her pure spirit ascended into the realms of eternal bliss. When her father saw that she had expired, he fell fainting to the ground; and when the venerable Agapitus entered the cell, he found the supposed Smaragdus dead, and Pafnutius lying senseless upon the floor. Very much alarmed, he endeavored to revive the old man by throwing water in his face, and by raising up his head. He succeeded after a while in restoring Pafnutius to his senses, and then asked him what had caused his faintness. Pafnutius declared that the only desire he now had was to die, for that a wonderful thing had been revealed to him. He then related to Agapitus the extraordinary fact that Smaragdus was no other than his long lost daughter Euphrosyne. The Abbot was at once informed of what had happened, and when he entered the cell of the holy virgin, exclaimed: 'Pray for us, Euphrosyne, thou faithful spouse of Jesus Christ, that we may be thought worthy to share with thee the company of the Saints, and the joys of the kingdom of heaven.' He then told the astounding news to the assembled brothers of the monastery, who gave thanks to God for having endowed a feeble woman with the strength to endure, without a murmur, the austerities of their order.

"Among those who came in wonder to gaze upon the countenance of the Saint, was a brother who had lost the use of one eye. When he came near the body he touched it, and from that very moment his sight returned.

"The miracle was witnessed by all who were in the room, and with one accord they burst forth in a hymn of praise and thanksgiving to God for what had happened in their midst.

"Pafnutius never again left the convent, but begged permission to live until the end of his days in the cell occupied by his saintly daughter. He gave all that he possessed to the Church and convent, where he passed ten years in serving God diligently. Every year the good monks celebrate the festival of St. Euphrosyne with great devotion, and invoke her prayers in their behalf, for the Psalmist says that 'God is wonderful in his Saints.'"

## ST. MELETIUS.

(February 12.)

*"One Fold—One Shepherd"*

THREE hundred years after Christ a frightful heresy was taught by a Priest named Arius, who declared that Jesus Christ was not equal to the Father, but only the first of created beings. He instilled this poisonous doctrine into the minds of many Christians, so that the emperor and even some Bishops were among his adherents. A dispute consequently arose between the true followers of Jesus Christ and the disciples of Arius, for the Catholics maintained that the Son was equal to the Father in all things. Just at this time Meletius was made Bishop of Antioch, of which city the great St. Chrysostom was afterwards Bishop. There were many Arians among the inhabitants, and they were full of hope that the new Bishop would declare himself in their favor. They therefore went with the Catholics to meet him, and treated him with the greatest respect and veneration. But we can form an idea of the man who was destined to play so important a part in the history of the Church, from the two panegyrics delivered in his honor by the great St. Gregory of Nissa and St. Chrysostom. They both declare him to have been a man of God, and one whose life was remarkable for its purity, simplicity, and love of justice, but above all for the possession of the Christian virtues of humility, meekness, and love of peace.

We can imagine how unpleasant a task it was for an amiable man like Meletius to find himself obliged to excommunicate so many who had received him kindly, but who nevertheless denied the divinity of Christ. He did not hesitate, however, to use his power as a Bishop, and for his firmness in this respect drew down upon himself the hatred of the Arians, who succeeded in persuading the emperor Constantius, although himself a Christian, to send into exile the pious and venerable Meletius.

The governor wished to accompany the Bishop as far as the gates of the city, and offered him the use of his carriage; but the Catholics were so enraged at the fact of losing their chief pastor, that they threw stones at the governor, and Meletius was obliged to wrap his cloak about the person of the governor, in order to protect him from receiving violence at their hands.

When Meletius reached Samosata, the place of his exile, his enemies slandered him by saying that it was not for defending the Catholic faith, but for his constant quarrels with the priests that he had been sent into banishment. The great St. Jerome was even deceived in this respect, but afterwards discovered the injustice he had done to the holy Bishop by imagining that a man so full of the spirit of peace and love as was Meletius, could have been guilty of the wicked things imputed to him by his defamers.

The emperor appointed an Arian to fill the vacant seat of Antioch, and



those who had embraced the heresy were consequently elated at the victory they had obtained over the true followers of Jesus Christ. The good Catholics remained faithful to the doctrines of their holy religion, and to the interest of their exiled Bishop, whose name they frequently gave in baptism to their children, in order to testify their love and respect for him, although so far separated from him. They kept his likeness in their houses, and had it engraved upon their silver and other articles of value. Their services were held among themselves, so as to avoid being in any way participators in the Arian heresy.

At length Constantius died, and Jovian, his successor, recalled Meletius from his exile. But when the venerable prelate arrived in Antioch, he found himself encompassed by difficulties of every kind, for some of the disaffected Catholics had themselves elected a Bishop of their own. While things were in this state of discord and confusion, the Christian emperor Jovian died, and was succeeded by Valens, who was a furious Arian. The new emperor endeavored to force the Catholics into embracing his heretical opinion on the subject of the divinity of Christ, but Meletius resisted firmly any encroachment upon the Catholic doctrine of the Trinity, and was therefore again sent into exile. When permission was given to him to return, his non-compliance with the commands of the emperor was the cause of his being sent into exile for the third time.

The Emperor Valens was slain in battle, and his nephew Gratian, who succeeded him, was an excellent Catholic. He recalled all the Bishops who had been sent into exile, and among them Meletius, who, according to St. Chrysostom, was met by such a multitude that many could not approach within sound of his voice, but were contented to even see him from afar.

To settle all religious differences, and in order to examine and define the true Apostolic Faith, a Council of Bishops assembled in the year 379, A. D., over which Meletius presided, and the Catholic doctrine establishing the divinity of Jesus Christ was then defined.

Towards the close of his life he was called to preside over a Council assembled at Constantinople. It was just at this time, 381, A. D., that Theodosius the Great became emperor. He was a most pious and exemplary Catholic, and it was revealed to him in a dream that he should receive the imperial diadem and purple from the hands of Meletius. When therefore the Bishops were all assembled in Constantinople, the emperor forbade any one to tell him the names of the different Bishops in order that he might himself discover Meletius; and the moment he saw him he recognized in him the venerable person who had appeared to him. He embraced the holy Bishop with the respect and affection of a son, kissing him upon the eyes, lips, and hands.

While the Bishops were yet in council, Meletius died, and was buried with extraordinary honors, but his body was afterwards taken to Antioch.

There are some persons who are so indifferent upon matters of religion, that they declare a Jew or a heathen has as just a claim to heaven as a good

Christian. By entertaining such opinions, they only prove themselves to be worse than the heathens, for they have no faith in the belief that it is impossible to be saved, except through the merits of Christ. How unlike the Saints and martyrs who sacrificed their lives rather than renounce their faith in their crucified Saviour.

In St. Meletius, we find a Christian who refused to conform in the slightest particular to any of the heresies of his day, and one who suffered exile and hardships, rather than comply with the demands of an heretical emperor.

About three hundred years ago, Luther, Calvin, Zwinglius, and many others left the Catholic Church, and were the cause of great dissensions among the people. They each of them founded a different religion, such as the Lutherans, Calvinists, &c., but were all known as Protestants. Such a separation in the Church is not only displeasing to God, but it is disastrous to those who are unmindful of the injunction of Christ, in which He says that there shall be but "one fold, and one Shepherd."

One head can not have two or three bodies, and for this reason Christ is the Head of but one Church, the Catholic; for she was in existence before the different heresies were ever heard of. St. Paul calls the Church "the pillar and ground of truth." The truth consequently is to be found in the Church which existed in the time of the Apostles themselves, and not in a church founded by discontented spirits like Luther or Zwinglius. It is necessary for salvation to belong to a Church in which may be found all the sacraments, instead of belonging to a Church in which this or that sacrament is dispensed with, as is the case in the different Protestant sects. It becomes us, however, as Catholics, to be kind and charitable in our intercourse with Protestants, for Christ says: "By this shall all men know that you are my disciples, if you have love one for another." We should nevertheless be careful never to visit their places of worship, never to read their books or tracts, and to avoid any discussion with them on matters of religion, unless they wish to be informed on the subject of our holy faith. It is a mortal sin, therefore, when in mixed marriages the Catholic party gives consent that their children shall be brought up as Protestants, thus depriving their children of that which their religion teaches them is above all price. "For what doth it profit a man if he gain the whole world, and suffer the loss of his own soul."

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## BLESSED JORDAN.

(February 13.)

*"Wisdom in Speech."*

SIX hundred years ago, St. Dominick founded the order of Dominicans, whose province it was to preach the word of God to the people. When St. Dominick died, a German friar by the name of Jordan was elected General of the order. He was chosen on account of the holiness of his life, and for his extraordinary talents as a preacher. He never failed to make a favorable impression, whether addressing a multitude, or when speaking alone with a person. He died in a manner that to a sinner would be terrible, but for one whose whole life had been only a preparation for death, was but a quick passage from time to eternity.

Blessed Jordan had made a vow to visit the Holy Land; but while at sea, on his way to the East, a terrific storm arose, and all on board of the ship were lost. Many things that happened immediately after his death prove him to have been pleasing in the sight of God, and that he was in the enjoyment of eternal bliss.

A Dominican friar was once sent to the city of Bononia, and made such an impression upon the people by means of his sermons, that an embassy was sent to Jordan, asking his permission to retain the eloquent preacher among them; for they declared that although the good seed was sown, the fruit would be lost if he, the sower, were not left to gather in the harvest. The Blessed Jordan praised their good intentions; but said in answer to their petition: "It is not customary for him who sows the seed, to carry his bed into the field, and there wait until the seed brings forth fruit. He recommends what he has done to God, but betakes himself to another field, and there sows more seed; for the Saviour once said to His disciples: 'Let us go into the neighboring towns and cities, that I may preach there also; for to this purpose am I come.'"

A wicked impostor one day met Blessed Jordan in the street, and begged for assistance; but not having any money with him, Jordan took off his cloak and gave it to the beggar, who immediately sold it and spent the proceeds in the most infamous manner. One of the friars gently reproached the Blessed Jordan for his misplaced benevolence; but the holy man only said: "If you see one who pretends to be sick and poor, you are not to blame for relieving his apparent necessities. I would rather part with my cloak, than lose my charity."

A certain man who had left his faith, was again brought back into the fold of Christ, and desired to become a Dominican. It was put to the vote whether he should be received or not, and all answered in the affirmative with the exception of one friar who strenuously opposed admitting him. "We all know



that this man has been a great sinner; but if we do not receive him he may perhaps relapse into his former sinful state," said his Superior. "I do not care what becomes of him," replied the friar. "If you had ever given one drop of your blood for him, instead of having shed all for him as Christ did, you would care whether he was saved or not," answered Blessed Jordan. Very much ashamed, the friar withdrew his opposition, and begged his holy Superior to pardon his want of charity.

A Religious once asked Blessed Jordan which was most pleasing to Almighty God: to be constantly employed in prayer, or in reading books of devotion. "You might just as well ask me which is best: to be always eating, or always drinking;" replied the venerable man.

Blessed Jordan made good use of affliction, for once when very ill he had the misfortune to lose an eye; but instead of giving way to useless sorrow, he called together the friars and said to them: "Brothers, join with me in returning thanks to God for having lost an enemy; but if it will be for my good, ask Him to preserve the sight of my other eye."

A person once asked him why it was that since the foundation of the Dominican order the times had not been so prosperous. "I could prove to you that exactly the reverse is the case," answered Jordan, "but even if what you say were true, it would only convince me that we had impressed upon the people a knowledge of their sins, of which perhaps they were before in ignorance, and it is therefore their own fault if they have not listened to our admonitions, and amended their lives; for by refusing to do so, they only bring down upon themselves the wrath of God. The Gospel says: 'That servant who knew the will of his Lord, and prepared not himself, and did not according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes.'"

A lay brother, whose office it was to attend to the out-door affairs of the convent, begged to be released from the duty, but Blessed Jordan only said to him: "There are four things connected with the performance of your duty: carelessness and impatience, or labor and reward. From the first two I dispense you, but the other two I impose upon you in order that you may obtain pardon for your sins."

When preaching, he endeavored to vary his sermons in order to attract the attention of his hearers; at one time using a more familiar, at another a more energetic strain of discourse. His friends sometimes remonstrated with him for the severity of his remarks, but sooner or later they would perceive that he was right in what he had said; thus verifying the passage of Holy Scripture, in which it is said: "In the lips of the wise is wisdom found: and a rod on the back of him that wanteth sense."

## ST. ABRAHAM.

(February 14.)

"How to convert others."

ST. ABRAHAM led a holy and retired life in Mesopotamia, but having heard that the inhabitants of a village on Mount Lebanon were still heathens, he was filled with a pious zeal to convert them. It was necessary, however, for him to be very prudent, and to conceal his intentions from the people, who would otherwise have driven him out of the village, or perhaps have put him to death. He therefore appeared among them in the character of a tradesman, and sold nuts; he also rented a house and paid the rent in advance. He lived very quietly for some time, never speaking of religion, but after a while he commenced to say his prayers in a loud voice. Some persons who heard him, collected a crowd around his house, and threw all manner of things at him, for they had now discovered that he was a Christian, and were determined to drive him from among them. While affairs were in this state, the collector of taxes made his appearance, and called upon the people to pay their taxes; some who were unprepared, were arrested, and others beaten, according to the custom of the time (400 A.D.). The holy Abraham felt that now was the time to exhibit the Christian virtues of charity and forgiveness, and thus imitate the example of Jesus Christ, who prayed for His enemies while hanging upon the cross. He begged the collector to have a little patience with the people. The officer said that if those who had not paid would give him good security, he would release them from their imprisonment. Hearing this, Abraham offered himself to be answerable for the amount, and promised to pay one hundred pieces of gold.

The inhabitants were astonished at his extraordinary kindness, and entreated him to forgive them for having treated him so cruelly, and with one voice asked him to become their ruler. He consented to do so, but only on condition that they should build a church. To this they readily agreed, and told him to select the spot, and they would begin the work at once, which they did, so that in a very short time the church was ready for use. When every thing was in perfect order, Abraham told the people that he would send for a priest; but they declared that he should be their spiritual as well as temporal ruler. He therefore studied for the priesthood, and after being ordained, remained with the people for three years, instructing them how to lead holy lives; but, at the end of that time, when he was convinced that another could better fill his place, he sent for a priest, and retired into his former hermitage.

There are many Christians who sincerely desire to convert others to the true faith, but they imagine that by arguing upon different points of theology, or by reading certain books, they will be enabled to gain their point.

They are sometimes blessed in their efforts by Almighty God; but the easiest plan by far is to give a good example to those whom they wish to convert, as Abraham did to the heathen villagers, thus putting into practice the words that they have preached.

A sick man, who was an infidel, was once taken to a hospital under the charge of the Sisters of Charity. The chaplain, who was a very pious and zealous man, endeavored to convert him, but the dying man refused to listen to any thing he said. The sight, however, of the patient, humble, self-denying Sisters of Charity, moving about like guardian angels from couch to couch, watching day and night with the sick, purely for the love of God, made such an impression upon him, that he became a Catholic, and died in the peace of God.

We all have it in our power to give a good example. If any one is rude and insolent, it only makes matters worse for us to scold and reproach; let us rather try to soften the hardened heart by words full of meekness and good nature; for the Holy Scripture says: "Kindle not the coals of sinners by rebuking them, lest thou be burnt with the flame of the fire of their sins."

In conclusion we will add whatever else is known of St. Abraham.

On account of his great piety, he was elected Bishop of Karræ, and the fame of his sanctity having reached Constantinople, he was invited by the Emperor Theodosius to visit that city, where he was received with the most distinguished honor by the imperial family. St. Abraham died in Constantinople in the year 422 A.D., and it was the desire of the emperor to deposit his remains in one of the churches of that city; but hearing that the inhabitants of Karræ claimed the body, he sent it to them. When the remains reached Karræ the crowd that assembled to see them was so great that the people were obliged to be kept back by force from the sacred body of their Bishop. Their only desire was to obtain some little relic of him. Some gave praise to God for having permitted a Saint to live among them; others refused to be comforted at their loss; and others again spoke of his charity and gentleness as their pastor, calling him by the endearing titles of "Father," and "Provider for the poor."

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## ST. GEORGIA.

(February 15.)

"Cultivation of the soul."

ALL that is known of St. Georgia is, that she lived in France when Christianity was first introduced into that kingdom. We gather the following facts concerning her from a book of legends, written twelve hundred years ago by the celebrated Gregory, Bishop of Tours, in which he mentions Georgia as belonging to the time and country in which he lived. He says: "In Arverna there dwelt a pious virgin, who left the city in order to escape its many distractions, and retired to the country, where she spent her whole time in religious meditation, and in giving praise to God. She fasted rigorously, and was very punctual in frequenting the holy sacraments. When her pure spirit left the world, her body was taken for burial to a church in the city. As soon as the funeral procession began to move, a flock of pigeons made their appearance, and hovered immediately over the bier. When the body was taken into the church for the services to be performed, the pigeons were seen sitting upon the roof, and waited there until the bier was again brought out. They continued to fly directly over the body of the Saint, and did not leave it until it had been placed in its grave, when they then took their flight to heaven. She was therefore called Georgia, a name she merited, for her life was spent in spiritual labor for the cultivation of her soul, and after her death her body was accompanied to its last resting-place by the birds of heaven."

Georgia is a Greek word, and means a "cultivated soil." Our Saviour sometimes compares the soul of man to a field, which, if neglected by the owner, will produce nothing but weeds. The successful growth of the crops depends not only upon a rich soil, but upon the quality of seed that is sown, the unremitting labor of the possessor, and upon favorable weather. If left uncultivated, the earth will bring forth nothing that is useful to man; the good seed must therefore first be planted before we can expect fruit, and even when the soil has been carefully tilled, tares grow up with the wheat, so that it is necessary to uproot them and cast them from the field. So it is with the soul; if left to himself man would never arrive at the knowledge and love of God; but by the grace of God we are all enabled to gather from the lips of His priests, and from good books, the seeds of wisdom, and to sow them in our hearts. But it sometimes happens that even when well-disposed to listen to the voice of God, evil inclinations will spring up by which we are tempted to relapse into sinful habits, so that if we do not shut our ears to the promptings of the tempter, all that we have done to save our souls will be so much time wasted. It becomes us, therefore, to cultivate and nourish in our hearts the growth of heavenly wisdom,

to make good resolutions, and to keep them; to frequent the sacraments of the Church, and thereby draw down upon ourselves the refreshing dew of the Holy Spirit and the sunshine of God's favor. St. Paul says: "It is God who worketh in you, both to will and to accomplish, according to His good will;" and in the preceding verse he tells us, "in fear and trembling, work out your salvation." (Philippians, 2 : 13—14.)

But we must labor patiently, for the fruit does not appear until after the seed has been planted for some time. In the fourth chapter of St. Mark, beginning at the twenty-sixth verse, our Saviour says: "So is the kingdom of God, as if a man should cast seed into the earth and should sleep, and rise night and day, and the seed should spring and grow up whilst he knoweth not, for the earth of itself bringeth forth fruit, first the blade, then the ear, afterwards the full corn in the ear." In the same manner we should remember that it is as impossible for us to attain perfection at once, as it is for the seed that is just sown to bring forth ripe fruit. God has patience with us, why then should we not have patience with ourselves? We must, however, be careful lest "the enemy come when we sleep," and by stealth undo in a moment what it has cost us years to accomplish. How often do we see a violent hail-storm destroy in a few minutes whole fields of ripened corn. So it is with us; for if after spending the greater part of our lives in the service of God, we deliberately commit a mortal sin, all our good works avail us nothing in the sight of God; and it is to prevent this happening that our Lord has taught us to pray: "Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil."

We must also remember that unless rain falls upon the earth, the seed will not spring up. Rain is as necessary to the farmer as sunshine; and in the same manner does Almighty God try our faith in Him, by sending affliction upon us. But our consolation should be in the knowledge that "Whom the Lord loveth He chastiseth, and He scourgeth every son whom He receiveth." (Hebrews, 12 : 6.)

When the harvest is gathered in, it matters little whether the sun shines or the rain falls; all that the farmer does then is to separate the cockle from the wheat, and prepare the latter for use. We should, therefore, be careful to make the best use of the time that is left to us, for when the Great Reaper, who is God, gathers in His harvest, it will be too late for us to wish that, when living, we had obeyed His commandments.

We have it now in our power to cultivate, in our souls the growth of every Christian virtue, and if we neglect to do so the fault is our own. If we endeavor to serve God faithfully in this life, He will reward us with never-ending joys in the world to come. Let us, therefore, beg Almighty God to bestow upon us the light of His countenance, so that we may be encouraged to persevere in the good path we have chosen; for it is written in the Holy Scriptures: "In the morning sow thy seed, and in the evening let not thy hand cease: for thou

knowest not which may rather spring up, this or that ; and if both together, it shall be the better." (Ecclesiastes, 11 : 6.)

## ST. ONESIMUS.

(February 16.)

"Perfect charity."

It is strange how men calling themselves Christians, can despise those whom it has pleased Almighty God to place in humble circumstances ; but they should remember the poverty of the God-man, who said of Himself, that "The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air nests ; but the Son of Man hath not where to lay his head." And again, St. Paul says in his Epistle to the Philippians, 2 : 7 : "He debased himself, taking the form of a servant."

The man, therefore, who scorns his neighbor because he is poor, and not able to appear finely dressed, or is obliged to labor for his daily bread, is no Christian at all. Let him beware, for it may be that in the next world, the beggar, whom he despised upon earth, will be elevated far above him in heaven ; and let him remember the example of the rich man, who, when suffering the torments of the damned, begged from Lazarus, to whom he had once refused charity, a drop of water to allay his burning thirst.

It is very wicked, also, to look with contempt upon our neighbor, because he is a sinner ; we know not but that we may ourselves fall into the very same sin, or perhaps into even greater sins, while he may be converted and become a saint. One of the Apostles betrayed his Saviour, and hung himself in despair after committing the awful sin, while, on the other hand, a thief, hanging upon the cross, was received into the joys of the kingdom of heaven, because he was penitent. It would, therefore, be more pleasing to God if, instead of avoiding the sinner, we should endeavor to convert him ; for our Saviour has declared that He came upon earth to seek only that which is lost.

In the life of the Saint whose memory we celebrate to-day, it is beautifully and clearly shown how the Spirit of God excites in those who truly possess Him, feelings of mercy and charity towards the poor.

In the time of the Apostles there lived, in the city of Colossæ, a rich man, by the name of Philemon, who was converted to Christianity by St. Paul. Among the many slaves owned by Philemon was one called Onesimus, who was in the habit of neglecting his duty, and who finally robbed his master, and ran away from home. He wandered to Rome, and there met St. Paul, who, although engaged in the work of converting nations, did not neglect to labor for the salvation of one soul ; and by this great Apostle was the poor, wicked, runaway



slave Onesimus baptized and instructed in the knowledge and love of God. After receiving him into the fold of Christ, St. Paul sent him back to his master with an epistle, which is still recorded in the Holy Scriptures, and in which, after praising the charity and lively faith of Philemon, he says: "I beseech thee for my son, whom I have begotten in my bonds, Onesimus, who hath been heretofore unprofitable to thee, but now is profitable both to me and thee, whom I have sent back to thee. And do thou receive him as my own bowels: whom I would have retained with me, that in thy stead he might have ministered to me in the bands of the gospel: but without thy counsel I would do nothing: that thy good deed might not be as it were of necessity, but voluntary. For perhaps he therefore departed for a season from thee, that thou mightest receive him again forever: not now as a servant, but instead of a servant, a most dear brother, especially to me: but how much more to thee, both in the flesh and in the Lord? If therefore thou count me a partner: receive him as myself. And if he hath wronged thee in any thing, or is in thy debt, put that to my account. I Paul have written it with my own hand: I will repay it: not to say to thee, that thou owest me thy own self also. Yea, brother. May I enjoy thee in the Lord. Refresh my bowels in the Lord. Trusting in thy obedience, I have written to thee: knowing that thou wilt also do more than I say." (Philemon 10-21.)

Philemon fulfilled the request of St. Paul, and received Onesimus kindly when he returned to Colossæ. He bestowed upon him his freedom, and sent him back to Rome in order to minister to the wants of St. Paul, who was then sixty-three years old, and in prison. From being an unfaithful and an unprofitable slave, Onesimus became, by the grace of God, such an excellent and worthy Christian, that St. Paul ordained him a deacon—an honor that was only conferred upon the best and most exemplary Christians. When the great Apostle wrote his epistle to the Colossians, he sent it to them by the hands of his faithful deacon Onesimus.

Some accounts say that Onesimus was sent to Spain to preach the Gospel, and afterwards to Asia, and that finally he became Bishop of Ephesus. As he was known to be such a zealous Christian, the pagans took him prisoner, and carried him to Rome, where he was stoned to death.

What can be more contemptible in the eyes of man than an unfaithful slave? But, by a miracle of God's grace, the poor outcast Onesimus became a Christian and a Bishop, so that by his means thousands were brought out from the darkness of unbelief into the glorious light of faith. It pleased God to bestow upon him also the crown of martyrdom, which he would never have possessed if he had been unkindly treated by St. Paul, or harshly received by his master Philemon; but as they both encouraged him to follow in the footsteps of his divine Master, he became not only a Saint, but a martyr.

Let us resolve, dear reader, to imitate the example given to us on all occa-

sions by our Saviour, and be mercifully disposed towards the sinner. Like St. Paul, let us instruct the wicked and ignorant in the knowledge and love of God, and teach them how to avoid offending Him; let us put aside forever all feelings of pride, and be full of the Spirit of God, which is a spirit of love, charity, and humility.

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## ST. SILVINUS.

(February 17.)

"Be not solicitous."

ST. SILVINUS was born in the city of Toulouse, in France, in the year 700 A.D. He belonged to a noble family, and was even betrothed to a lady, when he resolved to lead a life of celibacy, in order to serve God more perfectly, for the Gospel says: "Every one that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands for my name's sake, shall receive an hundred-fold, and shall possess life everlasting."

Silvinus went to the Netherlands, where he was the means of converting many to the true faith. The greater part of the inhabitants were still ignorant of the blessed truths of the Gospel, and he therefore devoted himself to the task of instructing such in the knowledge and love of God. He not only taught them by word of mouth, but by the holiness of his life induced many to lead edifying lives; and, in fact, his pious efforts were so blessed by Almighty God, that the people not only respected him as a father, but honored him like a prince; for he is said to have surpassed all his cotemporaries in the practice of humility, piety, and charity. He was benevolent towards all, judicious in his instructions, humble in the service of God, agreeable in his manners, serene in his countenance, poor in his appearance, but rich in the Lord. He never wearied in the performance of his duties, was hospitable to strangers who came to visit him, and would wash their feet (an act of kindness customary at that time), place before them whatever he had best in the house, and if they were in need of clothes give them some of his own. In doing this he but fulfilled the command of the Saviour, who says: "Amen I say to you, as long as you did it to one of these my least brethren, you did it to me." All that he possessed he gave without hesitation to the poor, for it is written: "Be not therefore solicitous for to-morrow: for the morrow will be solicitous for itself. Sufficient for the day is the evil thereof." (Matt. 6: 34.) He knew that the pleasures of this world were fleeting, and he therefore labored unceasingly for the joys of the world to come.

He made frequent pilgrimages to the shrines of different Saints, in order to

obtain their powerful prayers in his behalf, and in fulfillment of a vow he had made, he visited the Holy Land, and all the sacred places where our dear Lord had lived and suffered.

His biographer says of him: "He was a father to the orphan, a help to the widow, a protector to the virgin, and an honor to the priesthood. He was a peace-maker, prudent in his speech and holy in his dealings, always putting into practice what he preached. All that he had he gave to God, and the good that he effected he ascribed, not to his own merit, but to the power of God. He built two churches for the glory of God, and for the honor of His holy name, either by his own means, or by the contributions of pious persons.

He was very moderate in his diet, and for years lived only upon vegetables and fruit. His bed was the bare ground, his apparel plain and coarse; for he did not choose to belong to those of whom the Lord says: "They that are clothed in soft garments are in the houses of kings."

His zeal for the salvation of others did not forsake him, even when stretched upon the bed of death, for he exhorted all who came to see him to think constantly of death, to avoid sin, and to follow in the path leading to life everlasting. Just before he died, he exclaimed aloud: "See the angels of God near us;" and, having uttered these words, he went to join the glorious company of Saints, who had come to visit him in his last moments upon earth.

What a contrast does the death of Silvinus form to that of a man whom we once knew. Instead of praising God in his affliction, he spent his whole time in cursing. Instead of conversing upon religious matters, he spoke only of worldly losses and gains. Although standing upon the threshold of death, and as the breath was about leaving his body, he said to his daughter: "The devil is waiting for me!" What a sad end for one who had been baptized a Christian, and the only reason why he died so unhappily, and without the consolations of religion, was because his soul was possessed with the demon of avarice.

Avarice is a sin of which most men of mature age are guilty, and yet how seldom are they conscious of it, how rarely do they confess it, and how little effort do they make to root it out from their hearts. There are different kinds of avarice: for instance, the man is avaricious who defrauds or deceives his customer for the sake of gain; he is avaricious who interests himself only in the things of this world, instead of the things belonging to God; he is avaricious who neglects Mass on Sundays and holy days, in order to have the more time to devote to business, and who can not spare a moment to say his prayers or to think of God; he is avaricious who envies the success of his fellow-laborer, or who wilfully refuses to pay his taxes, and who grieves more at the loss of a little money than at the commitment of a mortal sin. Finally, he is an avaricious man who only strives to accumulate wealth for his children, instead of giving them a good Christian education, and who values the friendship of a bad man because he is wealthy and influential, more than he does the esteem and



love of a good man who is a poor tradesman. The Holy Scriptures declare that the man who is avaricious is as bad as one who worships idols; for he makes money his god, he thinks of it constantly, and loves it with all his heart and strength.

It is in vain that he seeks to clear himself of the charge by saying that he recites his prayers daily, and goes regularly to church. So did the Jews; they worshiped the true God, but nevertheless bowed down before the golden calf. The Lord says: "Thou shalt not have strange gods before me."

Think of Judas, who allowed himself to be tempted by thirty pieces of silver to betray his blessed Lord and Master, and learn to avoid the detestable sin of avarice.

Some men say: "I never have thought of becoming rich, or of living luxuriously, but I have a large family, and my income is small; I am in debt, and can not help giving way to feelings of depression and gloom, and I therefore leave no means untried to make money." But we say to you, listen to the voice of God who created you, and who will let no harm come upon you if you place your whole trust in Him. Rely upon God and not too much upon your own efforts, or the assistance of man, and imitate the example of Silvinus, who gave all that he possessed to God, who never suffered him to want, because he had so much child-like confidence in the love and mercy of his heavenly Father. Remember, too, the words of St. Paul: "Godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into this world, and certainly we can carry nothing out. But having food and wherewith to be covered, with these we are content. For they that will become rich, fall into temptation, and into the snare of the devil, and into many unprofitable and hurtful desires, which drown men into destruction and perdition. For the desire of money is the root of all evils, which some coveting have erred from the faith, and have entangled themselves in many sorrows." (Timothy 6 : 6-10.)

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## S T. L E O.

(February 18.)

"Truth and Falsehood."

THE habit of telling falsehoods is one of the many evils which result from yielding to the sin of avarice, for the covetous man will not hesitate to tell a lie in order to add to his profits, or to protect himself from a serious loss. Every one is guilty of falsehood who permits himself to be ruled by his passions—for those who are vain and haughty lie, so that their pride may be satisfied; those whose hearts are full of hatred lie, because they strive to excuse their wicked feelings, and to disparage those whom they hate; the indolent lie, because they wish to avoid doing their duty, and the criminal at the bar lies, so as to escape the punishment of his sin. In a word, all lie who are not regenerated by the Holy Ghost. The simple word of a true Christian, therefore, is worth a thousand oaths from a liar.

The consequences of truth and falsehood are much greater than the world believes; for in the Holy Scriptures, God is called the "Father of truth," and the devil the "father of lies." If we are scrupulous as regards telling the truth, then we show plainly that the Spirit of God dwells in our hearts, and our reward will be life everlasting; but, if we deliberately tell an untruth, and persist in doing so, then it is evident that the devil has dominion over us, and that we shall be eternally damned.

It is a very poor excuse to say that your untruth injured no one; it injures yourself, and exposes you to the danger of hell-fire. A good Christian will not tell a lie, if by doing so he would gain the whole world, or even save his life, for he knows that nothing is more hateful to God than a lying tongue.

That many Christians do possess the true spirit of Christ, and cheerfully lay down their lives rather than offend God by telling a lie, is abundantly proven in the histories of the saints and martyrs of the Church, especially in the life of the martyr Leo, whose memory we celebrate to-day.

St. Leo lived in Asia at a time when the Christians were terribly persecuted; and among those who suffered martyrdom was a friend of his, by the name of Paregor. Just after his death, the pagans celebrated one of their festivals, in which the Christians, by order of the governor, were commanded to join; but instead of obeying, Leo went to visit the grave of Paregor, and spent his time there in pious meditation and prayer, while the feast was being celebrated. On his way to the cemetery he was obliged to pass the spot where the pagans had assembled to hold their festival, and by his dress and his not joining them in their worship, they knew that he must be a Christian. He was, however, allowed to proceed, and after spending some hours at the grave he returned to his home, his mind full of the heroic deeds and glorious death of his friend Paregor. In

the night he had a dream in which he saw Paregor standing in the middle of a stream, whose waters had been lashed into fury by a violent storm. Paregor called him to come with him, and having done so, they both reached the shore in safety without being carried away by the rushing torrent. When Leo awoke and thought of his dream, he felt convinced that it was an omen of his being put to death by the pagans, and of his obtaining the crown of martyrdom, as Paregor had already done.

He continued his visits to the grave of him who, when living, had been his dear friend and companion, passing fearlessly through the large square in front of the heathen temple; but, on one occasion, seeing a great many lights burning before an idol, and anxious to manifest his detestation of idolatry, he threw down the tapers and trampled upon them, saying to the people while he did so: "Let your idols prevent it if they have any power." Full of rage and excitement, the pagans dragged him before the governor, who said to him: "It seems, although an old man, that you are ignorant of the power possessed by the gods to destroy you for having scoffed at their worship." "Why do you speak of gods?" replied Leo; "there is but one God, who is the Lord of heaven and earth; your gods of stone and wood know nothing of the honor that is paid to them by burning lights before them. If you believed in the true God, you would not bow down before an inanimate idol, made by the hands of men." "You are teaching the doctrine of Christ, instead of defending yourself," said the governor; "but if you will even now promise to offer sacrifice in the temple, I will not punish you." "I am a Christian," answered Leo, "and obey the precepts of the Apostles; if you intend to put me to the torture I will cheerfully submit to the punishment, and by doing so I shall obtain life everlasting; for the sacred Scriptures tell us that 'narrow is the gate, and strait is the way that leadeth to life; and few there are that find it,' (Matt. 7: 14.) The Jews and pagans, who had been listening to the conversation, now called upon the governor to command Leo to keep silence, but the governor said: "I shall permit him to speak, and I also offer him my friendship if he will consent to worship the gods." "You have already had my answer," replied Leo; "I shall never bow down before an idol made by man."

The governor, enraged at the old man's firmness, commanded him to be scourged, and while the order was being executed, said to him: "What you suffer now is nothing in comparison with what will follow; therefore listen to what I tell you, and offer sacrifice to the gods as the law demands." "What I said before, I now repeat," answered Leo; "I detest your idols, and will not worship them." "Only say the words, 'Great are the gods,'" urged the governor, "and I will release you in consideration of your age." But Leo only answered him by saying: "Your gods are great in wickedness, and only powerful to destroy the souls of those who believe in them."

The governor threatened to put him to death by having him dragged over



rough stones, if he did not declare that the gods were the preservers of the world ; but Leo positively refused to utter a word. His firmness only increased the rage of the people, who had assembled in large crowds, and the governor, in order to gratify their hate, sentenced Leo to be dragged to the place of execution, with his legs tied together ; and while this was being done the crowd continued to beat him in the most cruel manner. But the Christian martyr gave thanks to God, that by his death he could atone for the sins of his life, and he begged Almighty God to bestow upon his murderers the grace of repentance, since it is written : " As I live, saith the Lord God, I desire not the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live " (Ezekiel, 33 : 11). After his death, the body of the martyr was thrown from a high rock into a deep ravine, with the expectation that it would be dashed to pieces ; but it was found by the Christians almost unhurt, with a smile upon the countenance, as if dreaming of something beautiful. He was buried by his friends, who gave thanks to God for having permitted Leo to die so glorious a death, and they all begged Almighty God to receive them hereafter into the company of the holy martyr St. Leo.

And now, dear reader, judge for yourself—do you think that any liar will be allowed to join the blessed army of martyrs in heaven, who sacrificed their lives rather than offend God by telling a lie ? Leo could have saved his life, and have obtained the friendship of the governor if he would only repeat words that he did not believe ; but he, like a true Christian, preferred death rather than disavow the principles of his holy faith.

Perhaps you think it no sin to lie in order to obtain some temporal good, or to tell a falsehood in jest, and thereby offend God for a trifle, or for the sake of exciting a laugh. Is it possible that you can imagine for a moment that you are treading in the footsteps of the holy martyrs of truth, who freely gave their lives in defense of the truth ? But for fear that you may think that we exaggerate the evil consequences of lying, we will quote for your instruction a passage in the Revelations of St. John, in which he speaks of those who are excluded from the joys of heaven. " Without are dogs, and sorcerers, and unchaste, and murderers, and servers of idols, and *every one that loveth and maketh a lie.*" (Apocalypse of St. John, 22 : 15.)

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## ST. BARBATUS.

(February 19.)

"The Blessed Sacrament."

THE city of Benevento in Italy, has a day set apart for the special veneration of its patron Saint, Barbatus. Six hundred years after the birth of Christ nearly all of Italy had been converted to the true faith; but when Barbatus received his appointment to the see of Benevento, he found many of the inhabitants of that city sunk in the grossest idolatry. A golden serpent, which they had in their possession, was supposed to have great power, and was worshiped by them as a god. It was impossible for a holy priest like Barbatus to remain indifferent under such a state of things, and he therefore made the greatest efforts to convince the people of their wickedness, and to bring them to a knowledge of Christ. He frequently admonished them in the kindest manner, and once said: "I entreat you, dear children, to forsake the worship of idols, and to have faith only in the power of the true God; for it is He who rules the universe, who controls the councils of kings, and who holds in His hands the heavens and the earth as though they were but a grain of seed. What power has the golden serpent whom you honor? What does it know or feel? Renounce, therefore, the worship of a serpent, by whose means death was brought into the world, and serve your Divine Master, Jesus Christ, by whom you will gain life everlasting."

The indefatigable exertions of Barbatus were for a long time unsuccessful, as the heathens thought themselves bound to remain faithful to the customs of their ancestors, to the strict observance of which they ascribed their success in war.

It sometimes happens that Almighty God by means of affliction tries to soften the hardened heart of a sinner who has refused to be converted from his sins, and he has often done the same thing with cities whose inhabitants were addicted to a particular vice. We shall now see what happened to Benevento.

Constantine, emperor of Constantinople, invaded Italy with a large army in order to reconquer it, and after having pillaged and destroyed many cities on his way, marched upon Benevento, and laid siege to it. Although bravely defended by Prince Romnald, it was soon evident that as so many of the inhabitants had already been killed, the city could not hold out long against so superior a force as that of Constantine's. Almost in despair, the entire population, men and women, resolved to make one final effort to drive off the enemy, and they determined to be left dead upon the field rather than be taken prisoners. Hearing of their resolution, Barbatus appeared before the vast multitude, and said to them: "My children, in your tribulation turn to God for help. He can deliver you from your enemies, for it is He who humbles and exalts. Re-

nounce the worship of false gods, for it is the devil who tempts you to bow down before the golden serpent, and it is he who will destroy your souls eternally. Turn to the worship of the true God, and give praise to the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, who is one God in three persons. Pray to Him, who is the searcher of hearts, promise to serve Him faithfully for the future, and He will destroy the power of your enemies."

This time the pious exhortations of Barbatus were not lost on the people, for the prince and all present promised to embrace the true faith, and to believe henceforth in Jesus Christ, and to worship Him only. Barbatus then went into the church, which was dedicated to the Blessed Virgin, and kneeling before the altar implored the Mother of God to intercede with her Divine Son in behalf of the inhabitants of Benevento, for whom He had also shed His most precious blood, that they might be delivered from the hands of their enemies, and from the delusions of the devil. Barbatus felt in his heart that Almighty God would grant his prayer, and he therefore went to Romnald, and told him that the Lord would save their city, but that, in order to obtain His favor, it was necessary for the people, like those of Nineveh, to beseech the Divine assistance, which they accordingly did.

Romnald had a faithful friend by the name of Sesnald, and when the city was in danger of falling into the hands of Constantine, Romnald sent him with a message to his (Romnald's) father, who was king of the upper part of Italy, to come to his assistance; and it so happened, through the providence of God, that he was hastening with a great army to the relief of his son, at the very time that Barbatus promised the inhabitants deliverance from their enemies if they would renounce idolatry, and have faith and confidence in the one true God. The king had sent Sesnald in advance in order to encourage Romnald to hold out until his approach, but unfortunately the faithful envoy was taken prisoner by the soldiers of Constantine, who tried to compel him to deceive the citizens of Benevento by telling them that he had not been successful in his errand, and that it would be better for them to surrender. They accordingly carried Sesnald before the walls of the besieged city, and sent for the prince, in order that he might listen to what Sesnald had to say. But what was their astonishment to hear the brave soldier call out to his prince, as soon as he saw him: "Do not lose courage, Romnald, for your father is very near the city with a large force. Take care, I pray you, of my wife and children, for what I have told you will cost me my life."

Full of wrath, Constantine ordered him to be immediately beheaded, and his head thrown over the walls into the city. It was picked up, and carried at once to Romnald, who kissed the face, and wept bitterly at the sad fate of his faithful friend, after which he commanded that it should be carefully buried. When the emperor found that an army was on its way to relieve the city of Benevento, he raised the siege, and marched off with his army, so that the people were saved from falling into the hands of their cruel enemies. But, like the promises se



often made by persons on a sick bed, to amend their lives if they recover, yet who nevertheless relapse into their former sins when restored to health, so it was with the inhabitants of Benenento. They left off the public worship of the golden serpent, but worshiped it secretly, and had firm faith in its power. Barbatus discovered their deception, and in the sorrow of his heart besought Almighty God for a remedy. One day he went to the palace of the prince, and finding him absent asked to see the princess. After conversing with her for some time, she begged the holy Bishop to tell her what means she could use to convince her husband of the utter folly of worshipping idols. "Have perfect confidence in God," replied the Saint, "and be courageous. Give me the golden serpent, and your husband will be converted." "If I were to do so," said the wife, "I would surely die." "No evil will befall you," answered Barbatus; "but you will receive the reward of eternal life."

She accordingly delivered the idol into the hands of the Saint, who sent at once for a goldsmith and ordered him to make from the gold a chalice and a paten. Very soon after Romnald returned to Benevento, and it so happened that the day upon which he arrived was Sunday. Barbatus therefore invited him, before going home, to be present at the Holy Mass which he was about to celebrate. The prince consented to do so, and went into the church with his companions. Barbatus then entered, and offered up the Divine Sacrifice, using the new chalice and paten for the occasion. Just before Mass was finished he turned to the prince, and told him how God had saved the city and its inhabitants through the prayers of the Blessed Virgin, because all had then promised to become Christians; but that, although Almighty God had kept his word, they had broken theirs, and had returned to the worship of the golden serpent. He warned the prince not to provoke the anger of God by continuing in his present state of sin, for that if he did so, God would send some terrible calamity upon the city. The words of the Saint touched the heart of Romnald, who humbly received his reproaches, confessed his guilt, and begged the holy Bishop to pray for him. He promised never again to worship the golden serpent, but offered to give it to the Bishop, who could then make such use of it as he chose.

St. Barbatus lived to be eighty years old, and was consoled by the fact that none of those who had become Christians in his diocese, ever returned to the worship of false gods, so that idolatry never again obtained foothold in any part of his diocese.

It is singular that men in all ages, from the very commencement of the world, have been addicted to the very abominable sin of idolatry. Not only the pagans worshiped idols, but even the Jews, whom God Himself had instructed by so many wonderful miracles of His divine power and love, made a golden calf, and worshiped it. In order to punish them for their wickedness, God sent fiery serpents among the people, which bit them, and killed many of them. Upon their manifesting sorrow for what they had done, and in answer to the

prayer of Moses, God commanded him to make a brazen serpent, and to place it upon a pole where it could be easily seen, so that all who were bitten were immediately cured by looking at it. After the death of Moses, the Jews repeatedly fell into the sin of idolatry, and even Solomon was guilty of worshipping false gods. In the life of St. Barbatus we read of Christians who, although they had been baptized, and promised never again to bow down before an idol, nevertheless returned in secret to the worship of a golden serpent, and who might perhaps have died in their sins, if not cured of their blindness by the zeal and courage of the holy Barbatus.

One reason why idols have been worshiped was from the desire man has always had for something visible to adore. In Paradise God had intercourse with man in such a manner that they could both see and hear Him. The great Prophets, Moses and Elias, longed to see God with the eyes of flesh, and God revealed Himself in visible signs to them. The idea of an invisible God therefore did not satisfy all people, and they resorted to the wicked practice of making idols with their own hands, and then bowing down before them and worshipping them. How then can we Catholics sufficiently thank God for His mercy and love in condescending to be really present upon our altars, because there is no idolatry in our believing that it is Jesus Christ whom we see in the consecrated Host, for has He not said with His own divine lips: "This is my body—this is my blood?" Why, then, should we not bow down and adore the Lord of heaven and earth?

The Church celebrates with great solemnity and joy the festival of Corpus Christi, in memory of the institution of the Holy Eucharist, and of the real presence of Jesus Christ upon our altars. It is for this reason, therefore, that we fall down and adore the Sacred Host when it is carried in procession by the priest, and it is for this reason that we say: "May the Most Holy and adorable Sacrament of the Altar be praised and adored, now and forever."

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## ST. WILFRID.

(February 20.)

*'Covenant with the devil, and the manner of breaking it.*

ST. WILFRID was born in England about seven hundred years ago, and although a priest, appears to have been, when a young man, a very frivolous and worldly-minded person, and particularly devoted to the chase. Once while hunting he was met by a man who seemed to be a beggar, and who asked him for a new piece of money. Wilfrid told the man that he was not conscious of possessing such a coin, but the beggar said: "Only search your pockets and you will find two pieces." Wilfrid did so, and to his astonishment found two new pieces of money, one of which he gave to the strange beggar, who thanked him and said: "God will bless you for doing this, and in His name I tell you that you will soon leave this part of the country, and be sent to a place where you will find rest. There you will serve Him until the end of your days, and afterwards be received into the company of Saints."

Soon after, he was removed by his Superior to a place called Hilsborough, where he commenced to lead a life as self-denying as was ever led by a hermit. He never ate meat, but lived principally upon a kind of oaten bread; never touched wine except upon festivals, and even then, more in honor of the Saint than to gratify his appetite. He never slept in a bed, but when overcome by fatigue would rest his head against the wall; and he left no means untried in order to overcome every temptation against purity.

The following we quote from an old record: "In the north of England there once lived a poor man who in despair sold himself to the devil for the sake of obtaining wealth. In a very little time he regretted having done so, and made known his remorse to a friend, expressing his desire to break the bond between himself and Satan. Thereupon the devil appeared to him, and threatened him with the most terrible consequences if he should ever again speak to any one about their compact. The man said nothing of his intention, but resolved to visit a holy servant of God by the name of Wilfrid, who, he thought might be able to assist him in his trouble. When he had reached a brook which flows near Hilsborough, and was about to cross, the devil suddenly appeared, and seizing him by the arm, said: 'What are you doing here, traitor, that you are, I know that you wish to escape me, but in vain. You shall now pay for your treachery, and be punished with death; for you have not only denied God, but you now mean to deny me.' Having uttered these words, he held the man in the middle of the stream, intending to drown him.

"In a vision, St. Wilfrid saw what was happening, and calling a priest, said to him: 'Take a crucifix and some holy water and hasten to the relief of the poor man who is held by the devil in the brook near the city—sprinkle him



with holy water, and lead him to me.' The priest did as he was told, and found the man standing motionless in the water, without the power of moving either backwards or forwards. He at once sprinkled him with holy water in the name of Jesus Christ, and thereupon the devil was put to flight. The priest then assisted the man out of the water and led him to St. Wilfrid, who had been praying for him in the mean while. When the poor man entered the presence of the Saint, Wilfrid took him kindly by the hand, when the devil suddenly appeared and seized him by the left hand and attempted with all his power to drag him from the room; but Wilfrid threw holy water upon him, when he at once disappeared. Wilfrid then took the man into his cell and heard his confession; and after receiving the sacraments, he departed, much strengthened and consoled by the holy words and example of St. Wilfrid."

Many instances are related in olden times of persons who sold themselves to the devil. It is not an article of faith to believe all that we read or hear of such cases, but it is nevertheless very true that even at the present day many persons league themselves with the devil in order to obtain riches; for now many are guilty of fraud and deception, and all manner of sins, for the sake of becoming wealthy. It would be well for them to meditate upon the words of St. John: "He that committeth sin is of the devil." (St. John 3: 8.)

If Satan had it in his power, he would offer to those who would serve him vast wealth, high honors, great pleasures, long life, and every thing that the human heart could desire; but Almighty God keeps him from coming near us, unless we make ourselves his slaves by wilfully committing sin. And yet how many are there who for the sake of a few paltry dollars, or to gratify a momentary passion, deliberately offend God, and please the devil. How often does it happen that when the sinner desires to be converted, and wishes to confess his sins, the devil will resort to all kinds of artifices, so as to retain his hold upon what he thinks belongs to him. To those who have unjustly acquired property, he will suggest the possibility of their dying of want, if they should restore it to the rightful possessor. He persuades the drunkard that if he were to leave off his evil course, and to stop drinking, he would die at once; and to the man who has neglected his religion, he intimates the possibility of his becoming a laughing stock to his friends if he should return to the practice of his duties as a Christian. These are only some of the stratagems which he uses in order to keep entangled in his net the sinner whose conscience has been awakened. Now, dear reader, if you should unhappily be in a state of mortal sin, but yet sincerely desirous of amending your life, we will tell you what to do, in order to frustrate the wicked designs of Satan. Do not speak of what you intend doing to any of your former companions in sin, for they might dissuade you from your holy purpose, but go at once to the priest of God, make a good confession, receive the Sacraments of the Church worthily, and the power of the devil is at an end. We know ourselves that the mere fact of wishing to recover

from a dangerous sickness, will not cure us, but that it is necessary to call in a skillful physician, to follow implicitly the advice given by him, and to apply the remedies which he orders. As it is with the body of man, so is it with his soul.

Another instance in the life of St. Wilfrid shows us plainly that holy priests and pious persons are often the means used by Almighty God to deliver the sinner from the captivity of sin. Exhausted by his prayers and watchings, Wilfrid one night fell asleep, and in a vision saw three boys hanging above the altar, almost choked to death. One of them turned towards him, and said: "O Wilfrid, why do you delay assisting us?" And when he asked what he should do to help them, he was told to ascend the altar, and to untie the ropes by which they were fastened. The next morning when Wilfrid was reflecting upon what he had seen, three priests entered his cell, and falling upon their knees, confessed that they had been guilty of sins that had placed them upon the very brink of destruction. They entreated St. Wilfrid to absolve them, and to prescribe for them a remedy by which they might overcome their predominant passions. The Saint did so, and thus rescued from the yawning gulf of perdition those who had received the holy order of the priesthood.

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### BLESSED PIPIN.

(February 21.)

"The benefit of good counsel."

THERE lived in the Netherlands, seven hundred years after the birth of Christ, an excellent prince by the name of Pipin. Three powerful kings who occupied the throne in succession, intrusted to Pipin the entire management of their affairs, on account of his prudence, honesty, and capability. The one, however, over whom he most especially exercised his holy influence, was King Dagobert, who through him became a man full of zeal and justice, and who, on that account, was greatly beloved by his subjects.

The historian who wrote the life of St. Gertrude, a daughter of Prince Pipin, tells us that as long as Dagobert listened to the advice given him by the holy prince, his praises were sounded in every direction, and he became renowned for the piety and virtue of his life; but as soon as he admitted wicked advisers into his councils, he fell into mortal sin. He left his wife under the pretext that she had not blessed him with an heir to the throne, and lived with another woman; and as one sin is generally followed by others, he became in the course of time a most covetous man, seized upon the possessions of others, and, in a word, led a most wicked life. St. Amandus, a pious Bishop, once reproached

the king for his wicked conduct, and was consequently sent into exile. But even this warning did not deter Pipin from admonishing Dagobert upon his manner of living, and of his ingratitude to God.

In order to gratify his base passions, and instigated by other bad men, Dagobert endeavored to free himself from the restraint of his good friend's counsels; but as Pipin always conducted himself with the greatest propriety, it was impossible for the king even to invent a reason for dismissing his faithful minister. Pipin, after a time, regained the confidence of his sovereign, and persuaded him to amend his life. So complete was the trust which Dagobert had in Pipin, that he charged him with the education of his son Sigebert, who was destined to succeed him upon the throne of France.

While Pipin was first in the councils of Dagobert, he never thought it beneath him to consult with others before giving his opinion, and for this purpose chose as his friend and adviser Arnolf, Bishop of Metz, whose counsel he always obeyed. When Arnolf was dead, and Sigebert on the throne, he selected a wise man by the name of Cunibert, whose instructions he obeyed in all things, and who greatly assisted him in overcoming many disputes and difficulties that occurred in the reign of Sigebert.

Although charged with the greatest and most important affairs of state, Pipin never neglected the duties of a father, and so faithfully did he discharge his obligations in this respect, that two of his daughters, Gertrude and Begga, have been deemed worthy of canonization by the Church. His death was most pious and edifying, and his loss was sincerely lamented not only by the king, but by the entire country.

In the "Following of Christ," Book I, Chapter 9: 2-3, we read: "It is true, every one is desirous of acting according to his own way of thinking, and is most inclined to such as agree with him in opinion. But if God is amongst us, we must needs sometimes give up our own opinion for the blessing of peace. Who is so wise as to be able fully to know all things? Be not over confident, therefore, in thine own sentiments, but be ready also with pleasure to hear the sentiments of others. Although thine own opinion be right, yet if for God's sake thou leasest it, and followest another man's, thou wilt profit the more by it. For I have often heard that it is safer to listen and to take advice than to give it. It may also happen that each one's opinion may be right; but to be unwilling to acquiesce in other men's, when reason or occasion requires it, is a sign of pride and obstinacy."

A true Christian will always listen to good advice, and it was this willingness to consult with others, rather than follow the dictates of his own heart, that so especially distinguished the virtuous Pipin. We all know that the strength of one man, even if he should be remarkable for his skill, would not be sufficient to build a large house, and therefore it would be much wiser for him, if he felt



himself unequal to the task, to call in to his assistance other skillful and intelligent workmen.

But we must be very careful to select prudent and honest advisers, and to close our ears to the wicked suggestions of weak and heartless men, who resort to all kinds of flattery in order to gain the mastery over us. Let us follow the example of the wise Pipin, who chose for his counselors two men distinguished alike for their piety and wisdom. As long as King Dagobert was guided by the advice of his good minister, he was blessed in all his undertakings; but as soon as he listened to the unscrupulous courtiers by whom he was surrounded, he fell like King Solomon into sin and disgrace. If, therefore, we are fortunate enough to find a man full of the spirit of counsel, wisdom and godliness, let us ask his advice in all important and doubtful affairs—thus being mindful of the words: “It is safer to listen and to take advice than to give it.”

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## ST. MARGARET.

(February 22.)

“Examination of Conscience.”

MORE than five hundred years ago there lived in Italy a young maiden, by the name of Margaret, whose heart was full of the spirit of pride, luxury and frivolity. It need not therefore surprise you, dear reader, to hear that she was easily persuaded by a young nobleman to leave the protection of her father's home, and with her seducer lead a most vicious life for many years. The compassion that she always felt for the unfortunate and destitute, her inclination for solitude, and her frequent remark upon being saluted by any one that she was not worthy of notice, but only fit to be an object of scorn, proved, however, that her nature was not yet thoroughly corrupted, although she had never expressed the desire to reform, and lead a Christian life. Nevertheless it pleased Almighty God to look with pity upon this unfortunate woman, whose every action offended Him, and not to punish her for her sins, but to save her from eternal ruin.

She had lived nine years with her lover, when he was obliged to go upon a journey. He had been absent but a few days when his dog returned home without his master, and went howling about the house, seizing Margaret by her dress whenever she came near him, as if desirous of attracting her attention. Astonished at his singular actions, Margaret one day followed him some distance up a road, when he ran towards a pile of wood, and stopped there. Margaret put aside some of the logs, and there, to her horror, laid the body of her lover, who had been attacked by robbers, murdered, and his remains concealed behind

the wood-pile. It would be impossible to describe what Margaret felt at the terrible sight. But the chain was now broken that had bound her to the world, to sin, and to the devil. She saw with frightful clearness the result of her having sacrificed herself to a life of sin, and she experienced to the fullest extent the vanity of the world, and all that is in it.

With a heavy heart, and bathed in tears, she begged her father to receive her again into his house; but, instigated by her step-mother, he pitilessly refused her request. Now that she was forsaken by the world, Margaret knew not what to do; and, almost in despair, sat down to rest herself under a large tree. While meditating upon what she had best do, she seemed to hear a voice whispering to her, and telling her to seek a father and protector in God. But then again the devil suggested to her the value of her youth and great beauty, and the possibility of her supporting herself by continuing to lead a life of sin. A desperate struggle took place in her heart between good and evil, but it pleased God to assist her with His divine grace, and she decided to spend the remainder of her life in His service.

She went at once to the city of Cortona, and entreated to be received into the order of Penitents. After being admitted, she commenced to practice the greatest self-denial; used the discipline daily, and wept so bitterly over the sins of her past life, that sometimes real tears of blood would flow from her eyes. The greater part of what she received for her support, she gave to the poor, and every word and action showed that she was filled with the spirit of Christ. She rejoiced in her afflictions, and would gladly have taken upon herself the sufferings of others.

She attained a high degree of perfection; so that it proves conclusively that a sinner, no matter how grievous have been his sins, if he sincerely repents, is more pleasing in the sight of God than is an indifferent Christian, who perhaps never has done half as much to offend Him. All attempts of the devil, either to frighten her with the thought that the joy and consolation of spirit which she experienced were mere delusions, or to awaken in her a spirit of pride, because the renown of her sanctity drew crowds to visit her, failed; for she knew that Satan, who is damned forever, can not bestow upon the human heart the feeling of rest and comfort which she then felt, and besides, her humility was so great, that it was impossible for the devil to obtain the mastery over her, as she openly accused herself of the sins of her past life, and thus foiled him in his efforts to instill into her soul thoughts and desires that would have been punished with eternal ruin.

Among those who came frequently to see her was a rich widow, who before her marriage had led a very frivolous life, and who afterwards had only lived to be admired in society. Her friendships were feigned, her fasts scarcely observed, her alms rare, and bestowed more for the praise of men than for the sake of charity; and, although careful of herself, indifferent to the sufferings of

the poor by whom she was surrounded. She was imperious in her manners to those who were dependent upon her, and never hesitated to slander, with a mixture of truth and falsehood, those with whom she associated, concealing the good that she knew of them, and mentioning only their faults. She spoke harshly of those who had been unfortunate, and was filled with envy of those who occupied a higher position in society than she did herself. She would often converse in church, and although fond of criticizing the sermon, never applied any portion of it to herself. In a word, she thought and labored for herself, and not for God. The pious Margaret induced her to examine her conscience carefully, and to make a good confession; and was thus the means of saving a soul that was fast hastening on to the yawning gulf of perdition.

Perhaps, dear reader, you have been guilty of some of the sins committed by the widow, and have hardly thought them to be sins. If so, lose no time in making them known to a prudent confessor, who will assist you to overcome the temptations of the devil; for the Holy Scripture says: "If we judge ourselves, God will not judge us."

Listen to the advice of your friends and relatives, and try to amend what they see wrong in you. It may be that you have not sinned as did St. Margaret in her youthful days, but perhaps if you make no effort to shake off bad habits, and wait for old age to overtake you before you reform, it will be too late. One large stone may cause the sinking of a boat; but remember that grains of sand, weighing as much as the stone, will also lead to the same result.

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## ST. PETER DAMIAN.

(February 23.)

"The faithful servant of God."

IN his youth, Peter Damian taught with great success in the city of Parma, in Italy. Although he had many pupils, and enjoyed large revenues, he felt convinced that he was not walking in the narrow path that leads to heaven. He at first made no visible change in his mode of life, but wore next to his skin a girdle made of rough hair, fasted rigorously, and spent the greater part of his time in church before the Blessed Sacrament, gave liberally to the poor, and waited upon them himself when they ate their meals at his table. All that he did, however, while living in the world, could not satisfy the earnest desire he felt to serve God alone; and he therefore joined a community of Hermits. They lived in caves, fasted four days in the week, ate only bread and water, and never tasted wine except when celebrating Mass. They always prayed with outstretched arms, slept but little, and spent nearly the whole night in giving



praise to God. Peter Damian in a short time surpassed them all in every species of self-denial, and in the knowledge of the Holy Scriptures.

Soon after entering the community he was commanded by the Superior to preach before the brothers; and, although they numbered but thirty-five, his fame as an orator spread far and wide. The Abbot of a large convent in Pomposia wrote a letter to the Superior of the Hermits, begging that Peter Damian might be sent to him for the purpose of giving instruction to the inmates of his convent. For two years he labored incessantly among them for the glory of God, after which time he was recalled by his Superior, who, convinced that the office could not be better filled, appointed him as his successor, with the unanimous consent of the brothers. His vow of obedience compelled him to accept the dignity. His zeal for extending the kingdom of God became so great, that he was not content with ruling his own convent in piety and wisdom, but established five other communities, providing each one with an excellent Superior. He endeavored by his example and instructions to implant in the hearts of the brothers a spirit of love, humility and solitude.

The renown of the distinguished Peter Damian had reached Rome, and Pope Stephen IX., wishing to bestow upon a man so filled with the Holy Ghost an office of high honor, appointed him Bishop of Ostia. Peter used every effort in his power to escape the proffered dignity, in order to indulge his love for solitude; but under pain of excommunication he was obliged to accept the appointment, and at once entered upon the discharge of his duties with the greatest zeal and devotion. Whenever he found many persons at Mass upon feast-days, he would always preach to them, and with such eloquence that they never tired of hearing him.

At that time great abuses prevailed among some of the clergy in the city of Milan, especially the wicked custom of disposing of church benefices for money. The Pope knew of no one better qualified to abolish the evil than the saintly and energetic Peter. He was therefore sent to Milan for that purpose, with full authority as the Pope's delegate. When he arrived in Milan, he met with great opposition from the clergy, who endeavored to incite the people against him by declaring that he had only come to meddle in their affairs without any right to do so, and that it was their duty to defend their privileges. So great was the animosity shown him, that he was for a while in danger of losing his life; but he succeeded in reaching the pulpit of a church, and spoke with such wisdom and perspicuity concerning the holiness of his mission, that the people willingly promised to follow his directions. In a short interval of time he had the extreme satisfaction of finding the evil checked, and the clergy reduced to discipline and order. He did not hesitate to attack and expose in his writings many scandals among them, all of which practices he most effectually repressed. In spite of the many duties of his sacred office, he never omitted to provide plentifully for the poor, who came daily to his house. He would often go

among them, and wash their feet, showing thereby his perfect humility. In the midst of his active life, the pious soul of Damian would often long for the quiet of his hermitage; and he several times begged Pope Nicholas II. to relieve him from the duties of his episcopate, and permit him to return to his former mode of life, but in vain. After the accession of Alexander II. to the Pontificate, however, his desire was granted, and he re-entered his convent in the humble capacity of a brother.

But he was not destined to enjoy his holy solitude for any length of time. In 1063, he was sent by the Pope to France, in order to settle the dissensions that had arisen there between several Bishops, and by his prudence and kindness succeeded in his most difficult mission.

A few years later, Henry IV., emperor of Germany, declared his intention of being divorced from his wife Bertha, and of marrying again. The Pope, however, was determined to frustrate his wicked design, and Damian was sent as a delegate from the Pope to Frankfort, where Henry had assembled many of the Bishops, some of whom had promised to declare his marriage null and void. In the presence of the emperor and of the congregated Bishops, the heroic Damian clearly demonstrated to Henry the impossibility of his separating from his wife, as it was not only in violation of the laws of the Church, but would most assuredly endanger the salvation of his soul. By the blessing of God, the exhortations of the holy hermit were not lost upon the emperor, who renounced all further proceedings in the matter, so that Peter returned to his convent with the conviction that his labors had not been fruitless. He did not remain long, however, in the enjoyment of his seclusion. In consequence of the many scandals that had taken place in Ravenna, the native city of Damian, the Pope had excommunicated the Archbishop and all of the inhabitants of the place who adhered to him. Damian, who had written to the Holy Father, entreating him not to punish so many for the sins of one, was accordingly sent to Ravenna, in order to reconcile the people of that city to the Church. When the saintly envoy arrived in Ravenna, he found that the Archbishop had just died, and the citizens welcomed their distinguished fellow townsman with the greatest joy, performed the prescribed penances, and received the absolution which Peter, by permission of the Pope, was empowered to give.

On his way home, the aged Damian, then in his eighty-third year, was prostrated with a violent fever, while on a visit to a convent in Faenza, and there, in the year 1072, yielded up a life enriched with good works.

What we have written in relation to the glorious deeds and wonderful attainments of St. Peter Damian has no doubt excited your admiration, dear reader, but for fear that you may think it impossible to imitate him in his great undertakings, we will relate for your edification a beautiful instance of his early piety.

The parents of Damian were very poor, and had already been blessed with

many children when Peter was born. He was still a child when they died, and he was taken into the family of one of his elder brothers, where he was very cruelly treated. He was never sufficiently clad, and seldom had a pair of shoes on his feet; and in addition to this was frequently beaten, and compelled to do the most menial offices.

It sometimes happens that the body of a child can endure the greatest privations and the most barbarous treatment, but if he survives the inhumanity which he has suffered in childhood, he runs the risk of becoming in after life a cruel, unfeeling and tyrannical man. But we will see what effect want of affection and neglect made upon the heart and disposition of Peter Damian. It happened that he one day found a piece of money, and full of joy at his sudden accession to what he thought was unbounded wealth, he began to reflect upon what he had best do with it. He was in want of clothing and of everything that makes the life of a child happy; but, after debating with himself for some time, he took the money to a priest, and begged him to say Mass for the repose of his father's soul.

Now, dear reader, if you think it impossible to emulate the extraordinary sanctity and great virtues of the illustrious Bishop and Cardinal, Peter Damian, endeavor to imitate the piety of the forlorn and destitute child, and do not let your heart become hardened if cruelly treated by the world and its votaries.

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## ST. JOHN TERISTA.

(February 24.)

"Good Resolutions."

MANY centuries ago there lived in Arabia a man by the name of Mohammed, who founded a religion known yet as the Mohammedan. He did not deny that Jesus Christ came from God and was a prophet, but denied the fact of His being the Son of God, and declared himself to be the greatest prophet ever sent among men.

The Mohammedan religion consists of a mixture of Jewish and Christian truths, and shows evidently that the mind of the founder was in a most confused and insane condition. The only means used to propagate his false doctrine was by fire and sword, and in consequence many Christians and Jews, for fear of being put to death, embraced the Mohammedan faith.

The inhabitants of those countries that had adopted the new religion began after a while to invade Europe. The Turks succeeded in conquering the greater part of Greece, and finally established themselves in Constantinople, of which



city they still hold possession ; and the Saracens went to Spain and Sicily, where they ruled for many centuries, until driven out by the Catholics.

About seven hundred years ago, Sicily was still under the dominion of the Saracens, who would frequently make piratical cruises with their vessels along the coast of Italy. During one of these expeditions, in which they destroyed many towns and villages in Calabria, a Calabrian count was killed, and his wife, then on the eve of becoming a mother, was taken prisoner. Attracted by her great beauty, a Moorish prince determined to make her his wife, which he accordingly did, in spite of her protestations to the contrary. As soon as her son was born, the countess resolved, with the help of God, to bring him up a Christian ; but her Moorish husband used every means in his power to instil in the youthful mind of his step-son the false doctrine of Mohammedanism. When her child had reached a proper age, the countess one day said to him : "Just before your birth, my son, I was taken prisoner by the Saracens and brought to this strange country, where I was compelled to marry the prince. Your father, who was a Calabrian count, was cruelly murdered by the Saracens, and you are therefore the legitimate heir to his possessions. If you ever live to reach the castle you will there find a great treasure which your father and I concealed." She then cautioned him anew against Mohammedanism, and entreated him to be solicitous for the welfare of his soul. She told him that it would be impossible for him as a Christian to live among the Saracens, and therefore advised him to escape and reach Calabria if possible. In obedience to the admonitions of his mother, Terista resolved to brave all dangers, and having found a small boat, he entered it, and succeeded in reaching safely the coast of Calabria. His biographer states that when the Saracen guards discovered Terista putting off from the shore, they commenced to shoot at him with their arrows, and that his miraculous preservation from instant death was owing to the fact of his wearing a little cross which had been given to him by his mother.

As he was dressed after the manner of the Saracens, the Calabrians looked upon him with suspicion, and carried him to the house of the Bishop. Terista told the Bishop that his only reason for escaping from the Saracens was that he might receive baptism, and lead a Christian life. The Bishop found that he had been carefully instructed in the knowledge of his holy faith, and therefore baptized him with great solemnity in the church, giving him the name of John.

Terista frequently visited the church, and was particularly attracted by the picture of a Saint clad in a garment of camel's hair. He asked whom it was intended to represent ; and was told that it was St. John the Baptist, whose name he had received in baptism, and whose life of penitence and self-denial he should endeavor to imitate. This simple admonition—the sight of the picture—but, above all, the grace of God working in his heart, made Terista determine to

renounce the world, and to serve God in solitude. The Bishop, to whom he communicated his intention, advised him to join a community of hermits, who lived in small huts in the depths of a forest. Having discovered their retreat, Terista asked humbly to be received into their company, but they said: "You are too young to lead such a life, and instead of edifying, would only disturb us." "I have only come here to save my soul," replied Terista, "and if you will admit me, I will be obedient to you in all things." The hermits, however, refused to grant his request, and one of them said: "Leave us, child, for the rule by which we live is so rigid that even we can hardly follow it." Having said these words, they turned and left him, and recommenced their prayers. Terista, although discouraged, persisted in his application, until finally the hermits yielded and admitted him as a brother. Some time after he remembered what his mother had told him regarding the hidden treasure, and having asked permission from his Superior, he went in search of it, and found it concealed in the very spot described to him by her. The only use he made of his wealth was to bestow it upon the poor, without keeping the least portion for himself.

That Terista's life had been pleasing to God, is proved by several miracles that happened after his death, one of which we will mention, and this was the instant and miraculous cure of Roger, prince of Calabria, who in humble faith touched the garment of the deceased hermit, and who, in gratitude for his cure, afterwards built a church and convent.

St. John Terista, although a mere youth, is particularly distinguished for his perseverance and for his fidelity in executing the good resolutions which he had formed. He was not like an unhealthy tree that every year is clothed in blossoms, but yet never brings forth fruit. Our good resolutions, dear reader, are the blossoms of the soul, which, if not kept, thereby bringing forth fruits worthy of promise, will most assuredly prove the unhealthy condition of our souls. Such good resolutions are often taken in order to pacify a troubled conscience, but are as easily set aside as they are formed. We should consider that a resolution is a promise made to God, and we should on that account fulfill it sacredly. It would be well for us to observe the following rules:

First—Not to take too many resolutions at once, and to keep those we take.

Secondly—To renew our promises to God every morning, and to beg His gracious assistance in keeping them; and, before going to rest, to reflect carefully as to whether we have kept them or not during the day.

Thirdly—To remember that Satan will either tempt us to forget them or to disregard them; but that by earnest prayer we can gain the victory.

Since, therefore, a good resolution, if faithfully observed, is more precious in the sight of God than all the riches and honors of the world, it is only right and proper that we should determine:—Never to slander any one; never to

boast of our own merits; to suppress every feeling of envy or wicked joy at another's misfortunes; to endeavor always to prevent a quarrel, and to make peace if possible; to give alms upon Sundays and holydays; to direct our thoughts to God when in church; to attend Mass, if we can, upon week days; to read religious books upon Sundays and festivals, and to approach the Holy Sacraments every six weeks.

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## ST. WALPURGIS.

(February 25.)

Intercession of the Saints."

RICHARD king of England, lived in the eighth century. He, with his two sons, Willibald and Wunibald, and his daughter, Walpurgis, were so distinguished for the piety and holiness of their lives, that they have been deemed worthy of canonization by the Church. St. Boniface, a brother-in-law of the king, had left England and gone to Germany, in order to propagate there the Christian religion; and, on account of his zeal and great success, received the name of the Apostle of Germany. Boniface, who found it necessary to establish convents, sent to England for teachers; and, in answer to his call for help, Willibald and Wunibald had also left their homes, and gone to Germany. Walpurgis felt it her duty to do the same, and accordingly left England in company with her two relatives, St. Lioba and St. Thekla, and several other pious virgins who were ready to devote their talents and their lives to the service of God. During the voyage a violent storm arose, and for a long time the ship was in danger of being lost; but, owing to the prayers of St. Walpurgis the tempest was stilled, and they were enabled to reach Germany in safety. After seeing her uncle St. Boniface, she went to Heidenheim, now a town in Wurtemberg, but at that time containing only the convent of which her brother Wunibald was Abbot. Having arrived there, she, with several other nuns, took possession of a separate cloister which had been expressly built for them.

Although it was the wish of Walpurgis and her brother Wunibald to live in strict seclusion from the world, it soon became known that a prince and princess, from pure love of God, had left their homes, and renounced every earthly honor in order to serve God in solitude, and to lead a quiet and humble life. Every one looked upon them with the greatest reverence, and although but few followed their example, many, by sending rich presents and leaving legacies to the convent, enabled the Superior to receive those who felt that they had a vocation to lead a religious life.

Some ten years afterwards Wunibald died, in the peace of God, at Heiden-



heim, and his convent was left without a Superior. As the convent was in the diocese of Eichstaden, over which Willibald presided as Bishop, it rested with him to make the appointment; and as he knew no one better qualified by wisdom, piety and universal esteem than Walpurgis to administer the affairs of the convent, he appointed her Superior of both convents. She was at first very unwilling to accept the office, but finally yielded in obedience to the wish of her brother the Bishop. Subsequent events proved that the Bishop had made a wise selection, for the inmates of both convents obeyed her as implicitly as good children obey the commands of a prudent and holy mother. For sixteen years, and until the day of her death, she managed the affairs of the two communities with the greatest wisdom and forethought. She became a perfect model of virtue, and by leading herself a truly religious life, animated others to follow her example.

Protestants condemn Catholics for their belief in the intercession of Saints; but that the prayers of the good are heard in heaven, is clearly shown in the remarkable event which we will relate for the satisfaction of the pious reader.

In a castle near Heidenheim there lived a wealthy nobleman whose daughter had fallen dangerously ill. The father was almost prostrated with grief. St. Walpurgis having been informed of what had happened, determined to visit the castle. She accordingly went one evening, and although fierce dogs, which were allowed to roam about the castle-grounds during the night, rushed at her, she remained perfectly calm, and only said: "The dogs can not harm me, for I am under the protection of Jesus Christ."

She was received with the greatest reverence by the afflicted father, who immediately ordered an apartment to be prepared for her; but she declared her intention of passing the night in the chamber of the sick maiden, who was then in the agony of death. She begged them all to leave the room, so that she might be alone with the dying child. Her request was complied with, and having locked the door, she fell upon her knees, and prayed that God in His infinite mercy would restore the health of the sick child, and thus awaken not only in the hearts of her parents, but in those of the inhabitants of that region a true sense of piety, and a belief in the power of God to do all things.

It pleased Almighty God to listen to the prayer of the holy Walpurgis; and the parents of the dying girl, who were every moment expecting to hear her death announced, were astonished beyond measure when Walpurgis threw open the door, and bade them enter. Instead of a corpse they beheld their daughter fully restored to health. In the gratitude of their hearts they thanked God for what he had done, and then cast themselves at the feet of Walpurgis, and offered her most precious gifts. She refused to accept anything, and only exhorted them to love and serve God for the remainder of their lives; after which she returned quietly to her convent.

Thus we see that by her powerful intercession, a person at the point of

death was miraculously restored to health, and the unutterable grief of the parents changed into joy. The Holy Scripture says that "The continued prayer of a just man availeth much." (James, 5: 16.) How foolish, then, would it be for us to think that because the Saints have passed away from earth, that their prayers are less acceptable to God now that they are in heaven. In the Apocalypse of St. John we are told that the prayers of the Saints ascend like incense before the throne of God. To ask the Saints to intercede for us with God, in no manner derogates from the respect and veneration we owe to God. We all know that Jesus Christ is our only Mediator with the Father, but the Saints are the only intercessors who can pray to God for us through Jesus Christ.

It would be useless to deny the fact that miraculous cures have often been effected by invoking the Saints. In the case of St. Walpurgis it is positively asserted, that several blind persons, who begged her to intercede for them, were restored to sight; a lame man was enabled to walk, and a mother and daughter delivered from a great evil, besides many other remarkable cures. Do not regard, therefore, the ridicule of those who, without any faith of their own, seek to undermine the faith of others.

As the children of our Heavenly Father, we are obliged to offer our prayers before the throne of God; but it is certain that if we are in a state of sin our prayers are not pleasing to Him. By asking those to intercede for us who are dear to His sacred heart, we are sure to have our petitions granted; and by uniting our prayers with theirs we offer a holy violence to heaven which it will be impossible for Almighty God to resist.

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## ST. NESTOR.

(February 26.)

"Confessing our Faith in Christ."

IN the middle of the third century the Roman emperor Decius ordered a general persecution of the Christians. At that time Nestor was Bishop of Magyda, a seaport town in the district of Pamphilia. He was so unaffectedly pious, so meek and humble in his deportment, that not only the Christians, but the very pagans themselves loved and esteemed him. The persecution was however specially directed against the Bishop and Priests, for the pagans believed that by depriving the Christians of their shepherds, the flocks would soon be dispersed. St. Nestor advised the Christians to fly from the city, but remained himself in Magyda, where he spent his whole time praying for the welfare and safety of the Christian communities. One day he was informed

that a great crowd had assembled before his house. He went at once to the door, and said: "For what purpose have you come, my-children?" "To take you before the tribunal," was the reply; and, waiting only to make the sign of the cross, the holy Bishop followed his persecutors, like an innocent lamb led to the slaughter.

When he entered the presence of the judges, they, with one accord, rose from their seats and saluted him, and instead of being asked the usual questions before the people in the public session-hall, he was taken into a private room, and invited to seat himself in a richly covered arm-chair. St. Nestor thanked them for this mark of respect, and then inquired of one of the judges the reason of his having been summoned to appear before them. "You certainly know the law of the emperor," answered Irenarchus, the chief judge. "I know the law of God, but not the law of the emperor," replied St. Nestor.

Irenarchus then urged the Saint to submit willingly, in order to escape punishment. "To what shall I submit?" asked Nestor. "To the laws of the emperor," was the reply. "I will submit only to the laws of the Heavenly King," answered the heroic Christian. "You must be possessed," said Irenarchus. "You show yourself to be possessed by worshipping demons," replied Nestor. "How dare you call the gods demons!" said the angry judge; "for doing so you shall be punished until you acknowledge them to be the only true gods." But Nestor, making the sign of the cross, answered: "I do not fear any punishment but that of my God; and whether I am placed upon the rack, or permitted to go free, I shall confess Jesus Christ to be the Son of the living God."

St. Nestor was then taken to the city of Perge, the capital of Pamphilia, where the governor resided. Irenarchus, who had followed him thither, reported to the governor that, in accordance with his command, the Christians, and especially the Bishop, had been most kindly treated, in order that they might be induced to forsake the religion of Christ, and offer sacrifice to the gods; but that his efforts had failed in the case of the Bishop, who, by his example, had only strengthened the Christians in their faith.

The governor, turning to Nestor, asked him his name. "I am a servant of Jesus Christ," replied the Saint. "I did not ask you what you were, but what was your name," said the governor. "My name is Christian," answered the holy Bishop; "but if you wish to know my name in the world, it is Nestor."

The governor now exhorted him to escape the torture by sacrificing before the idols. He promised to intercede in his behalf with the emperor that he might be appointed a high-priest, and thus receive not only rich gifts, but be also one of the rulers of the province. When he heard the proposition of the governor, the Saint raised his eyes to heaven, and crossing himself, said: "I care not, though my body should be torn in pieces by wild beasts, or loaded



with chains; as long as I live and breathe, I will never deny my Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ."

He was then compelled to undergo the most cruel torments by order of the governor. His sides were torn by iron hooks until the ribs were laid bare; but, while suffering the most agonizing pains, the Christian martyr exclaimed: "May the praise of God be always on my lips and in my heart."

The governor was astonished at his fortitude, and asked him if he were not ashamed to rely so much on the assistance of one who had himself been crucified; but the martyr answered: "It is an honor for me, and for every one, to invoke the holy name of Jesus."

The people now loudly clamored for his death, and he was again asked by the governor if he would offer sacrifice to the gods. But Nestor only answered by saying: "Child of Satan, why do you persist in trying to make me renounce the true God, whom you yourself have denied, in order to worship vain images of wood and stone?"

When he saw that it was useless to continue in his efforts to make Nestor bow down before the idols, the governor pronounced the final sentence, and said: "Since you are unwilling, Nestor, to submit to the decree of the emperor, and worship the gods, and prefer to follow Jesus, who was crucified by Pontius Pilate, it is my command that you shall be punished as he was."

When Nestor was nailed to the cross, he spoke to the Christians who surrounded him, and said: "Dear children, never hesitate to confess your faith in Jesus Christ; never deny Him who suffered death that you might live. Suffer with Him that you may rejoice with Him. Deny Him not lest He may deny you in the kingdom of His Father, who gave Him as a propitiation for the sins of the world. Do not forget that at the sound of the name of Jesus every knee shall bow in heaven and upon earth, and every tongue shall confess that Jesus Christ the Lord is in the glory of God the Father." And, having uttered these words, he expired.

To this sermon, in word and deed, preached by the holy martyr while hanging upon the cross, we have but little to add. How much easier is it for us to confess Christ, dear reader, when neither torture nor death awaits, than it was for the Christians in the early ages of the Church. St. Nestor, and thousands of other martyrs, willingly suffered death rather than deny their faith in their crucified Redeemer, while we, on the contrary, are sometimes deterred from attending Holy Mass, or frequenting the Sacraments, for fear of provoking the sneers and laughter of a few wicked persons. How, then, would we have acted if, like St. Nestor, we had been dragged before a tribunal, and compelled either to deny Christ, or to suffer death?

Let us never forget what our Blessed Lord has said: "Whosoever shall confess me before men, him shall the Son of Man also confess before the Angels

of God; but he that shall deny me before men, shall be denied before the Angels of God." (Luke, 12: 8-9.)

## ST. BALDOMER.

(February 27.)

"The Christian Workman."

FROM among the many Saints whose memory we honor to-day, we have selected St. Baldomer, although but little is known concerning him. He was a blacksmith by trade, and lived eleven hundred years ago in the city of Lyons, in France. His biographer says: "Baldomer preserved his chastity from his very youth." Chastity is one of the indispensable conditions of a religious life, for without it the best action of man is as displeasing to God as the most costly food would be to us if served in unclean dishes. Baldomer, with his blackened face and hands, was infinitely more agreeable in the sight of God and His holy angels, because of the purity of his soul, than would be a king seated upon a throne, or a beautiful woman loaded with jewels, if they stained their souls with mortal sin.

"He was fervent in his piety and fond of reading religious books." How many mechanics try to excuse themselves for not saying their prayers by declaring that they have not a moment to spare; but they are sure to find time to eat their daily meals, and it never occurs to them that they are too busy to gratify their appetites. Prayer is as necessary for the strengthening and preservation of the soul, as eating is for the support of the body. He who works and eats, but does not pray, proves thereby that he values his body and his temporal benefits more than he does God and his immortal soul.

Many workmen, even when busily engaged, can find time to direct their thoughts to God if they are only willing to do so; and there is no excuse for their not devoting some portion of Sundays and holy days to the reading of good books instead of spending their time in taverns or some similar place.

"He always commenced work by saying: 'In the name of the Lord;' and when he had ended, he would say: 'Thanks be to God forever.'" How different is the language used by thousands of mechanics. Curses are always upon their lips, and hardly a moment passes without their breaking the second commandment of God. Nearly all men are obliged to labor in order to support those who are dependent upon them, but if their work is begun in the name of God, if they bear up patiently under the wearisomeness of their task, in submission to the will of God, if, while the hand is at work, the soul is elevated to God, then is the work precious and beautiful in the sight of God; it is as it were

sanctified, and will be richly rewarded in the world to come. If, on the contrary, a man works either from compulsion or to hoard up wealth, and does so with a discontented spirit, never speaking except to utter a curse, then his labor is consecrated to the devil. Every workingman therefore has it in his power either to devote himself and his labor to the devil and to destruction, by constantly cursing and blaspheming; or to sanctify and consecrate it to God by beginning it in "the name of the Lord," and ending it, as did St. Baldomer, by saying: "May the name of the Lord be praised for ever."

"The holy Baldomer exhorted the members of his household to give praise and thanks to God continually, and he did not hesitate to punish those who disregarded his commands, not out of anger, but from a desire to make them reform." It is the bounden duty of every head of a family to look after the spiritual welfare of the members of his household, and of those employed in his service, but yet how many are there who never think of this important obligation, and are only solicitous about the amount of work done by those whom they hire. It is the duty of every master to see that every one in his house recites their daily prayers, that all shall go to Mass upon Sundays and festivals, and that they shall frequent the Sacraments at least once in three months. He should never permit in his house or in his place of business any cursing, blaspheming, scolding, or indecent language. He must endeavor to keep those whom he employs from squandering their money in drinking or gambling, and if his repeated admonitions fail, it is his bounden duty to dismiss them from his service, although their skill might be of the greatest benefit to him.

"There was nothing vain or deceitful in him, and he was honest in all his dealings." How many mechanics are there, who, without any love for God in their hearts, are full of ambition and love of gain, and who do not scruple to stain the purity of their souls by lying, cheating, slandering, and indulging in malignant joy at the expense of some unfortunate brother workman.

"Baldomer was very humble in his appearance and dress, but yet so charitable, that when he had nothing else to give he would sell his tools for the benefit of the poor." A truly honest and Christian workman will not squander his earnings in buying useless and extravagant things, and will not be ashamed to dress plainly and in accordance with his means. He will work hard to support those who are dependent upon him, and to have it in his power to assist those who are poorer than himself. By leading an industrious and charitable life he will give a good example to the rich as well as to the poor.

"He was a faithful friend, and was most amiable and wise in his manners and conversation." The Holy Spirit is a spirit of love, peace, and joy, and those persons who are filled with the Holy Ghost are always mild and pleasant in their intercourse with their fellow-men. We are very apt to distrust the piety of those who always have a cross look upon their faces, and who are distant and repulsive in their manners. The soul of such a person can not be in a



healthy state, for where the spirit of Christ dwells, a bright and beautiful light is diffused over the countenance.

Viventius, the Abbot of a convent in the city of Lyons, once passed through the village where Baldomer lived, and having convinced himself of the extraordinary piety and virtue of the humble blacksmith, persuaded him to become an inmate of his convent. The daily manifestations of divine grace in his behalf, and his admirable qualities, soon became known outside of the convent walls, and St. Goodrich, who was at that time Bishop of Lyons, wished to elevate him to the dignity of the priesthood; but in his great humility, Baldomer did not think himself worthy of the honor, and, with tears in his eyes, he implored the Bishop to relinquish his intention.

Many birds were in the habit of assembling daily before the door of his cell, and of receiving their food from his hands. In his child-like innocence, the holy man, whose charity was known to the very birds of the air, would say to them while feeding them: "Appease your hunger, little ones, and then sing a song of praise to the Lord of Heaven."

After the death of St. Baldomer, many sick persons were miraculously cured by going to his grave, and invoking his intercession. Almighty God thus glorified after his death the faithful servant, who had glorified Him during his life.

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## "SAINTS WHOSE NAMES ARE UNKNOWN."

(February 28.)

"Visiting the Sick"

DURING the second century a terrible pestilence raged throughout the Roman empire, and the mortality was so great that within twenty-four hours five thousand persons died in the city of Rome. Its ravages were frightful in the city of Alexandria, and St. Denis, who was at that time Bishop of Alexandria, wrote a pastoral letter for Easter, in which he says: "No one would think that it is the joyous season of Easter. All are in mourning, and the sounds of lamentation are heard throughout the entire land for those who have died, and for those who are dying. As it was written, concerning the first-born of Egypt, every mother bewails her children 'because they are not.' There is not a house in which a corpse can not be found, and would to God this were the only affliction. We were first driven from our homes by the heathens, and then came war and famine, the horrors of which we were obliged to suffer in common with them, and now the plague has broken out in our midst. The heathens are filled with

terror and dismay, and refuse to assist one another; but to us, it is a time in which we are called upon to put into practice the duties of our holy religion. The majority of Christians, in a spirit of love and charity, have neglected their own safety in order to attend upon the sick, whom they have kindly nursed for Christ's sake, until they themselves have fallen victims to the disease. The best among us have died; several priests and deacons, and many other holy persons who have exercised the Christian virtues of faith and charity, have now for themselves the glorious crown of martyrdom. They did not hesitate to take into their arms those infected with the plague, and after tenderly closing their eyes when dead, would arrange their bodies for burial, although they were certain that a similar fate awaited them, and that others would soon do the same for them. The heathens, on the contrary, drove from their houses those who were attacked by the disease, even if they were in a dying condition, and would desert their nearest relatives. They left their dead unburied, for fear of coming in contact with death, but they were nevertheless stricken down by the very enemy whom they sought to escape."

This letter of St. Denis brings out in bold relief to the craven fear exhibited by the heathens, the beautiful spirit of charity and self-sacrifice manifested by the Christians, to whom, at the last great day, will be addressed the words of Christ: "Come, ye blessed of my Father, possess you the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was hungry, and ye gave me to eat; I was thirsty, and you gave me to drink; I was a stranger, and you took me in; naked, and you covered me; sick, and you visited; I was in prison, and you came to me."

It is therefore only right and proper that the 28th of February has been set apart by the Church as the day upon which we should honor the memory of those who fell victims to the plague in the city of Alexandria, while in the discharge of their Christian duties; and a place has been left in the Roman calendar for those Saints whose virtue we can imitate, if their names are unknown.

Why should we not follow the example of these heroic martyrs to the sacred cause of charity, dear reader, and visit the sick and afflicted? How many weary hours of the invalid could we cheer and enliven by our presence, and thus not only benefit them, but draw down upon ourselves the richest blessings of heaven. There are many sick persons who are so reduced by illness that it is dangerous to leave them alone, but whose relatives, on account of their poverty, are obliged to neglect them in order to labor for their daily bread. How kind and charitable would it not be in us, if we should offer to assist them in taking care of the sick, and sometimes to relieve them, when almost worn out with watching.

Sickness entails many expenses upon the poor, besides depriving them of their wages; and some strengthening food would often be of far more benefit to the invalid than medicine. We surely can not refuse to contribute towards the

relief of an afflicted fellow-creature what we would never miss from our own abundance.

In the beginning of a sickness, the relatives and friends of the invalid are full of anxiety for his safety, and consequently shower every attention upon him; but if the illness is protracted, the sick person will soon discover, from ill-natured expressions, and from impatient actions, that he has become a burden to his family, and this consciousness will only add to his bodily sufferings. But, behold, the door opens, and the Christian visitor, like an Angel of Charity, enters the room, and by a few sympathizing words changes the current of his thoughts, and infuses joy and gladness into his weary heart. So, dear reader, we find that it is possible for us even to emulate the example of the Christians of Alexandria. Every affliction can be turned into a blessing, for Almighty God never punishes man without some wise purpose. By affliction He warns the sinner to reform, the indifferent to become zealous, and the Christian to exercise the virtue of submission. But when the body is racked with pain, this desirable result is not always attained, unless there is some kind friend to guide and direct the thoughts of the sufferer. A field exposed to the burning sun, without ever receiving any moisture, will not only become barren, but the very grass will wither away. If, however, a soft rain falls upon the parched earth, the fields are soon dressed again in their beautiful verdure.

So it is sometimes with the soul of a sick person. If they are treated with neglect their hearts become hardened, and they long for the hour of death to come and put an end to their sufferings; but if, on the contrary, some good and faithful Christian comes to the rescue of an afflicted soul, and refreshes it with the dew of the Holy Spirit, by reading some religious book, and by preparing the invalid to receive worthily the Holy Sacraments, then, indeed, will such a Christian deserve to hear, when called to render an account of the deeds done in the body, the consoling words spoken by the Saviour: "Well done, good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."



## SECOND PART

OF THE ECCLESIASTICAL YEAR.

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### EASTER-CYCLE.

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WE have already remarked, in the introduction to this work, that Lent is a preparation for Easter, the principal feast and the centre of the second part of the Ecclesiastical Year. This time of preparation, instituted by the Church, even in the very first ages of Christianity, was not always of the same duration. Some Christians of the primitive Church would fast for seventy days, others for sixty, and others again for fifty or forty days before the celebration of the great festival of Easter; which last period has been generally adopted by the faithful, not only in memory of the Saviour, but in imitation of the example given us by two of the greatest men of the old law—Moses and Elias—who fasted for a period of forty days. Since, however, in the early ages of the Church, Lent commenced seventy days before Easter, the three Sundays preceding the first Sunday of the present Lent were added to this holy season, serving as it were for an introduction and preparation to the same. These three Sundays are called Septuagesima (seventy days), Sexagesima (sixty days), and Quinquagesima (fifty days before Easter); and in connection with these the Sundays following are called the first, second, third, fourth, and fifth Sundays in Lent. The three Sundays, therefore, preceding Lent, are of a very significant character. The Priest wears violet vestments while celebrating Mass, and the hymn of joy sung by the angels, “Gloria in Excelsis,” is omitted. The different parts of the Mass, such as the Epistles and Gospels, contain earnest truths. In them we are warned against committing sin, and are admonished to do penance, and to co-operate with the grace of God in order to become partakers of the fruits of redemption. We are told also to meditate upon the

sufferings of Christ, which subject should occupy the mind of every true Christian during the holy season of Lent. In the canonical hours we have recounted to us the history of creation, of the fall of man, of the wickedness of the world, and of its subsequent punishment by the deluge, of the calling of Abraham and of the promises made to him by the Lord, all of which wonderful events bear a close relation to the great truths upon which every Christian is bound to think during the penitential time of Lent. The seventy days before Easter remind us also of the seventy years spent by the Jews in Babylonian captivity, and point out to us the far more terrible captivity in which man was kept by the devil, in consequence of the first sin, but from which Christ, the Son of God, has in His infinite love and mercy, and by means of His bitter agony and most cruel death, delivered him.

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## SEPTUAGESIMA SUNDAY.

INTROIT OF THE MASS.—Ps. 17.

“The groans of death surrounded me, the sorrows of hell encompassed me, and in my affliction I called upon the Lord, and he heard my voice from his holy temple. I will love thee, O Lord, my strength; the Lord is my firmament, and my refuge, and my deliverer.” Glory be to the Father, &c.

These words were spoken by the royal prophet in thanksgiving to the Lord for having been saved from his enemies. All the faithful should at the commencement of this holy season call upon the Lord in humility and contrition of heart, but at the same time with confidence for deliverance from the state of misery to which they have been brought by sin. It is indeed a most appropriate manner of beginning Lent.

PRAYER.

Graciously hear the prayers of Thy people, we beseech Thee, O Lord, that we who are justly afflicted for our sins, may be mercifully delivered, for the glory of Thy name. Through our Lord.

EPISTLE.—1 Cor. 9: 24–27. 10: 1–5.

“Brethren: Know you not that they that run in the race, all run indeed, but one receiveth the prize? So run that you may obtain. And every one that striveth for the mastery refraineth himself from all things: and they indeed that they may receive a corruptible crown: but we an incorruptible one. I therefore so run, not as at an uncertainty: I so fight, not as one beating the air: but I chastise my body, and bring it into subjection: lest perhaps, when I

have preached to others, I myself should become a castaway. For I would not have you ignorant, brethren, that our fathers were all under the cloud, and all passed through the sea. And all in Moses were baptized, in the cloud, and in the sea: and did all eat the same spiritual food, and all drank the same spiritual drink: (and they drank of the spiritual rock that followed them, and the rock was Christ). But with the most of them God was not well pleased."

In these words St. Paul most earnestly admonishes the Christians to seek and obtain their salvation in the kingdom of God. He therefore compares the Christian to those who, in the Olympian games, ran races for a prize, consisting of a simple crown of olive leaves, which was bestowed upon the first who reached a certain mark. It was considered a great honor to win the crown, and the competitors for it would strain every nerve in order to gain it. Christians, therefore, should not walk slothfully in the way of salvation, but should work out their eternal destiny with energy and perseverance; for St. Bernard says, that the perfection of a Christian life consists in striving to obtain perfection.

The Apostle then alludes to the process used by the gladiators of hardening their bodies, so that they might be enabled to withstand the terrible blows dealt them in the combat. They did not even murmur when obliged to exercise the strictest self-denial in every thing that tended to weaken their bodily strength, and all this was done in order that they might obtain the victory over their opponents. The Apostle remarks, that if these men made such sacrifices in order to gain a corruptible crown, how much more should Christians, as true members of the church militant and as faithful combatants for the kingdom of God, endeavor to conquer the enemy of their salvation, and to win for themselves the incorruptible crown of heaven.

The Apostle then speaks of himself, and declares that he too follows the example of those who run in the race, by trying himself to become the victor in the spiritual combat for heaven. He says that he chastises his body so as to bring it into subjection, and thereby remove all evil inclinations and lusts of the flesh, which would otherwise impede the noble efforts of the spirit to win the prize, and lest perhaps in preaching to others, and working for their salvation, he himself should become a castaway. For us this lesson is one of the greatest importance; for if St. Paul, who did so much and suffered so much for the honor and glory of the holy name of Jesus, and for the salvation of others, declares that it is necessary for him to continue in his efforts to obtain the reward of his labors, how foolish would it not be for us to entertain the idle hope of winning an incorruptible crown without our ever making any sacrifices to gain possession of it, but on the contrary by indulging in luxury and neglecting our duties as Christians. We should rather, according to the advice given by the same great Apostle, work out our salvation in fear and trembling.

In order to lay more stress upon his admonitions, St. Paul shows, by a strik-



ing example, the possibility of our being lost for ever, notwithstanding the manifold graces which we have received from God, if we persist in sinning against His commandments. He directs our attention to the Israelites, who, in their exodus from Egypt under the leadership of Moses, and while on their journey to the promised land, were overwhelmed with benefits from the hand of God, miraculously led by the Lord Himself in a pillar of cloud through the Red Sea, and were thus delivered from Egyptian bondage. The safe passage of the Israelites through the waters of the Red Sea is a type of the baptism by which Christians are liberated from the bonds of Satan, and led into the land of eternal promise.

The Israelites were miraculously preserved by the Lord for forty years in the desert; they were fed with heavenly manna, and drank water from the rock, which was a type of the most Blessed Sacrament, in which we receive the true bread from heaven. Notwithstanding that they were the recipients of such wonderful favors from the hand of God, many of the Israelites became displeasing to Him on account of their disobedience and their other grievous sins, so that in punishment for their wickedness, but two of them, Joshua and Caleb, from among the hundreds of thousands who left Egypt, arrived in the promised land, accompanied by those only who had been born in the desert; while the rest were left to perish miserably without ever beholding Canaan—the land flowing with milk and honey. What a warning for Christians!

The Catholic Church, therefore, exhorts us to meditate upon the great truths contained in the Epistle of to-day, so that we may be encouraged to live as Christians, and to do penance for our sins in order to escape the just punishment of God, which we have deserved, and that we may also obtain a participation in the fruits of the passion and death of our Saviour, and thereby make sure of our election.

GOSPEL.—Matt. 20: 1-16.

“At that time: Jesus said to his disciples this parable: The kingdom of heaven is like to a householder, who went out early in the morning to hire laborers into his vineyard. And having agreed with the laborers for a penny a day, he sent them into his vineyard. And going out about the third hour, he saw others standing in the market-place idle. And he said to them: Go you also into my vineyard, and I will give you what shall be just. And they went their way. And again he went out about the sixth and the ninth hour, and did in like manner. But about the eleventh hour he went out and found others standing, and he saith to them: Why stand you here all the day idle? They say to him: Because no man hath hired us. He saith to them: Go you also into my vineyard. And when evening was come, the lord of the vineyard saith to his steward: Call the laborers and pay them their hire, beginning from the last even to the first. When therefore they were come that came about the

eleventh hour, they received every man a penny. But when the first also came, they thought that they should receive more: and they also received every man a penny. And receiving it, they murmured against the master of the house, saying: These last have worked but one hour, and thou hast made them equal to us, that have borne the burden of the day and the heats. But he answering one of them, said: Friend, I do thee no wrong: didst thou not agree with me for a penny? Take what is thine and go thy way: I will also give to this last even as to thee. Or, is it not lawful for me to do what I will? is thy eye evil because I am good? So shall the last be first, and the first last. For many are called, but few chosen."

This parable contains, according to St. Chrysostom, the great Christian truth, that the fact of entering heaven depends principally upon being called by divine grace, which grace is at different times bestowed upon man; and in accordance with the divine mercy, those who are called at a late hour receive the same reward as those who are called at an early hour.

The interpretation of this parable refers in particular to the calling of different nations to the kingdom of heaven, in different periods of the world's history; and the going out of the householder at various times during the day, in order to hire laborers to work in his vineyard, can be applied, according to the interpretation of the Holy Fathers, to the different periods in which man was called to the kingdom of God. The householder going out early in the morning, signifies the first calling of man, whom God in the beginning had created and placed in Paradise; at the same time giving him a command, by the observance of which he would obtain eternal reward in heaven. The householder going out about the third hour denotes the second calling of man, in the time of Noah, after the deluge, about fifteen hundred years after the creation of the first man, when God revealed himself to Noah, the second father of mankind, and made a covenant with him, to which He added many promises, as a sign that he and his seed coming after him were pleasing to Him. The going out of the householder about the sixth hour signifies the calling of Abraham, the father of the Israelites, who lived about five hundred years after Noah, and whom the Lord, on account of his uniform obedience and his virtuous life, chose from among the wicked and the idolatrous, to form from his seed a chosen people, whom He would favor by continued revelations, and among whom He would continue to preserve the knowledge and worship of God, and whom He would call from among all other nations to participate in the fruits of redemption. This was the remote calling of the Israelites as the chosen people of God. The going out of the householder about the ninth hour is the real calling of the Israelites, first through Moses, who lived about five hundred years after Abraham, and who delivered His people from Egyptian bondage; afterwards through the prophets, whom the Lord had sent to keep them always in the true belief; and finally through the

Saviour Himself, who appeared publicly among the Jews, taught and worked miracles amongst them, inviting them first to enter into the kingdom of God upon earth,—the Church instituted by Him. The householder going out about the eleventh hour, signifies the calling of the Gentiles, to which all the other nations of the earth belonged, first by the Apostles, whom the Saviour Himself sent out into the world, to teach all nations, and to receive them by baptism into the Catholic Church. This calling of the Gentiles was continued through all times by the successors of the Apostles, and still continues, and will continue, until the Gospel is preached over the whole world, and until all the nations of the earth have entered into the vineyard of the Lord—the Catholic Church, which is the kingdom of heaven upon earth.

But all who have obeyed this call, and who have labored faithfully in the vineyard of the Lord, no matter if they commenced to work at an early or at a late hour, shall, as our Saviour teaches in the Gospel of to-day, receive in the evening, that is in the day of judgment, the same reward for their labor; the last will even have a preference to the first. The fulfillment of this prediction we can sufficiently explain by the fact, that, according to history, the Gentiles, who were the last called, received the Gospel with more willingness than did the Jews, who were first called.

The parable of the laborers in the vineyard, however, can be applied also to the calling of each individual person, according to the different periods of life. Some are called early in the morning to labor in the vineyard of the Lord. To this class belong all those who have been fortunate enough to have been born of Catholic parents, and who have therefore possessed from their very youth the light of faith. Others are called at a later hour, even at the eleventh hour. To this class belong all those who have been born either in paganism, Judaism, or Protestantism, but who have afterwards, either in their manhood, or when advanced in age, by the grace of God been received into the Catholic Church, there to labor for the rest of their lives in the vineyard of the Lord. And the last shall at the day of reckoning receive the same reward as the first, that is—heaven. No wrong is done thereby to those who were called first, since heaven is a gift of God for all, and since none can obtain it without co-operating with His grace. In the calling of man at different periods of life, the word of God is often verified, that the last will be first, and the first last; since many of those who, when advanced in years, have entered the Church of Christ, have done more for the kingdom of God, and attained greater perfection than others who were born in the faith; take for instance the example of St. Paul, the great Apostle, and of St. Augustin, the great Doctor of the Church.

By the words: "Many are called, but few are chosen," our Saviour wishes us to understand that many are called by God to labor in His vineyard, and that He provides all with the means of salvation; but that notwithstanding a few only obtain eternal life, while others lose it through their own fault, because



they neither obey the command of God, or, if they obey in the beginning, do not remain faithful for any length of time.

This is a very important truth, corresponding with the words of St. Paul in the Epistle of to-day, and with those of St. Peter, in which he says: "Wherefore, brethren, labor the more, that by good works you may make sure your calling and election; for doing these things, you shall not sin at any time. For so an entrance shall be ministered to you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." (2 Pet. 1: 10-11.)

## SEXAGESIMA SUNDAY.

INTROIT OF THE MASS.—Ps. 43.

"Arise, why sleepest thou, O Lord? Arise, and cast us not off to the end: why turnest thou thy face away, and forgettest our trouble? Our belly hath cleaved to the earth: Arise, O Lord, help us, and deliver us.—O God, we have heard with our ears; our fathers have declared to us." Glory be to the Father.

These words of the royal prophet, in which he calls with confidence upon the Lord for assistance and deliverance from his enemies, the Gentiles, who were also the enemies of God, and by whom the Israelites had been defeated in battle, are very appropriately applied to the Faithful in this holy season, that with the same confidence they may implore God for deliverance from the servitude of Satan, and from the snares of sin, in which the enemy of our salvation endeavors to keep mankind.

### PRAYER.

O God, who seest that we confide in no action of our own, grant, in Thy mercy, that we may be defended from all evils by the protection of the Doctor of the Gentiles. Through our Lord. Amen.

EPISTLE.—2 Cor. 11: 19—12: 9.

"Brethren: You gladly suffer the foolish: whereas yourselves are wise. For you suffer if a man bring you into bondage, if a man devour you, if a man take from you, if a man be lifted up, if a man strike you on the face. I speak according to dishonor, as if we had been weak in this part. Wherein any man dares (I speak foolishly) I dare also. They are Hebrews: so am I. They are Israelites: so am I. They are the seed of Abraham: so am I. They are the ministers of Christ (I speak as one less wise), I am more: in many more labors, in prisons more frequently, in stripes above measure, in deaths often.

Of the Jews five times did I receive forty stripes, save one. Thrice was I beaten with rods, once I was stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck ; a night and a day I was in the depth of the sea : in journeying often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils from my own nation, in perils from the Gentiles, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils from false brethren : in labor and painfulness, in many watchings, in hunger and thirst, in many fastings, in cold and nakedness. Besides those things which are without : my daily instance, the solicitude for all the churches. Who is weak, and I am not weak ? Who is scandalized, and I am not on fire ? If I must needs glory : I will glory of the things that concern my infirmity. The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who is blessed forever, knoweth that I lie not. At Damascus the governor of the nation under Aretas the king, guarded the city of the Damascenes to apprehend me. And through a window in a basket was I let down by the wall, and so escaped his hands. If I must glory (it is not expedient indeed) : but I will come to the visions and revelations of the Lord. I know a man in Christ above fourteen years ago (whether in the body, I know not, or out of the body, I know not, God knoweth), such an one rapt even to the third heaven. And I know such a man, whether in the body, or out of the body, I know not : God knoweth : that he was caught up into paradise ; and heard secret words which it is not granted to man to utter. For such an one I will glory : but for myself I will glory in nothing, but in my infirmities. For even if I should have a mind to glory, I shall not be foolish : for I will say the truth. But I forbear, lest any man should think of me above that which he seeth in me, or anything he heareth from me. And lest the greatness of the revelations should lift me up, there was given me a sting of my flesh, an angel of Satan, to buffet me. For which thing thrice I besought the Lord, that it might depart from me : and he said to me : My grace is sufficient for thee ; for power is made perfect in infirmity. Gladly therefore will I glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may dwell in me."

The Apostle wrote these words first of all to clear himself from the unjust accusations of some false teachers, who, by calling themselves messengers of God, tried to slander him before the Christians of Corinth, by accusing him of inconsistency and weakness, wishing thereby to undermine his authority, and at the same time to introduce their own false teachings into the hearts of the faithful.

The Apostle was therefore bound, for the honor of God and the sake of truth, as well as for the salvation of the faithful, to justify himself before his enemies. To this end, and not out of vain glory, which was far from the mind of this humble minister of Christ, he mentions in a few concise words how much he had done and suffered for the name of Jesus, for the spreading of the Gospel, and for the salvation of the faithful. With the same intention the

Apostle enumerates to the Christians the graces which the Lord had bestowed upon him, and how he was even found worthy in his mortal life to behold the glory of heaven, and to have a foretaste of that happiness which is prepared only for the faithful servants of God. By the third heaven, to which he was raised, either in the body, or out of the body (the Apostle himself knew not), he understands the place where the majesty of God is visible, and where the Blessed dwell, distinguishing it, according to the understanding of the Jews, and the language of the holy Scriptures, from the atmosphere, in which the birds of the air dwell, and from the firmament, in which the stars are placed, which is also called the heaven of heavens. Very remarkable are the words of St. Augustin in reference to this passage.

He says: "By the three heavens are understood the three kinds of visions. The first heaven was that of the corporeal vision, just as Eliseus saw the fiery chariot, in which Elias was removed from this world, and King Baltassar beheld the finger that wrote upon the wall. By the second heaven is understood a manner of vision, wherein we see, as if in an ecstasy or dream, not bodies, but figures, as in the case of St. Peter, who saw a great linen sheet, wherein were all manner of four-footed beasts and creeping things of the earth, and fowls of the air. (Acts, 16.) The third heaven is one of a spiritual or intellectual order, where neither bodies nor figures are seen, but where the mind is arrested by the wonderful power of God, and beholds incorporeal substances. In such a vision was the Apostle rapt; but he asserts that he knew not whether he was in the body or out of the body—by which he means to say, 'I have not seen it with my material eyes;' so that, although in the body, it is not in opposition to the words of the Lord, which He spoke to Moses: 'Thou canst not see my face, for man shall not see me and live,'—that is, that man shall never see God, while in this life. (Exod. 33: 20.) Whilst in this state, the mind divines the truth without the aid of figures, and the soul possesses power without making any effort to obtain it. Its whole strength consists in loving only what it sees, and its happiness is complete in seeing and possessing what it loves."

But that it may not appear as if the revelations in regard to the extraordinary gifts and inspirations which he received from God, proceeded from vain glory, the Apostle soon after confesses in great humility his infirmities, which he possessed in common with other men; that he had been tormented by evil passions, and strongly tempted, so that almost in despair of overcoming them, he besought the Lord at different times to have them depart from him. But soon after the Apostle adds the very important lesson, which the Lord Himself had given to him, that the grace of God was sufficient to overcome even the strongest temptations; a truth full of consolation to us, and one which the same Apostle confirms in another place by saying: "God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that which you are able; but will make also with temptation issue, that you may be able to bear it." (1 Cor. 10: 13.)



Temptations, therefore, by which every mortal is assailed, and from which not even the greatest Saints were free, may however become the means of our salvation, especially if we strive to overcome them by the assistance of divine grace; so that it can be truly said that the power of divine grace is most clearly shown in man's infirmity, and in the triumph he obtains by conquering his evil inclinations.

GOSPEL.—Luke 8: 4-15.

“At that time: When a very great multitude was gathered together, and hastened out of the cities unto Jesus, he spoke by a similitude. The sower went out to sow his seed. And as he sowed, some fell by the wayside, and it was trodden down, and the fowls of the air devoured it. And other some fell upon a rock; and as soon as it was sprung up, it withered away, because it had no moisture. And other some fell among thorns, and the thorns growing up with it, choked it. And other some fell upon good ground; and being sprung up, yielded fruit a hundred-fold. Saying these things, he cried out: He that hath ears to hear, let him hear. And his disciples asked him what this parable might be. To whom he said: To you it is given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God: but to the rest in parables, that seeing they may not see, and hearing may not understand. Now the parable is this: The seed is the word of God. And they by the wayside, are they that hear; then the devil cometh, and taketh the word out of their heart, lest believing they should be saved. Now they upon the rock, are they who when they hear, receive the word with joy: and these have no roots; who believe for a while, and in time of temptation, fall away. And that which fell among thorns, are they who have heard, and going their way, are choked with the cares, and riches, and pleasures of this life, and yield no fruit. But that on the good ground, are they who in a good and perfect heart, hearing the word, keep it, and bring forth fruit in patience.”

The beautiful parable of to-day's Gospel is one the meaning of which our Saviour Himself has explained. St. Gregory justly remarks: “This parable does not need any interpretation, but only application; for what the eternal truth has made plain, human infirmity should not presume to interpret.”

The object, however, which our Saviour had in view when He made use of this parable, and the instructions, admonitions, and warnings contained therein, are particularly applicable to this portion of the Ecclesiastical Year, and are of the highest importance to us. Our Saviour, by this parable, wishes to draw our attention to the fact, that His divine doctrine, notwithstanding all the excellences it possesses, does not bring forth fruit in every case, and at the same time He instructs us how to prepare ourselves, if we wish to derive advantage from hearing the word of God.

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He therefore compares His doctrine to the seed, but the hearts of men who shall receive His teachings, to the soil; of which there are two kinds—the good and the bad. For as the good seed, when it falls by the wayside, or upon a rock, or among thorns, can not bring forth fruit, so the heavenly seed, by which is meant the divine teachings sown in the hearts of men, can not bring forth fruit by falling on the wayside, that is, upon the hardened hearts of men, when they listen to it without heeding it and without adopting it as their rule of life. It can not bring forth fruit by falling upon a rock, that is, where there is no good foundation in the heart, but only a momentary determination to do better, without any lasting result; for the first strong temptation will very soon destroy the weak resolutions so easily formed, just as the burning sun destroys the tender plant that has grown upon rocky or barren ground. The divine seed, which is the word of God, can not bring forth fruit when the hearts of men are filled with thorns, that is, with all manner of worldly cares, with avarice, wicked desires, and evil passions; for as tares grow up and choke the growth of the wheat, in the same manner do evil inclinations become strong in the hearts of men, choking as it were the growth of the word of God, and frustrating the effects of divine grace. If, however, the seed of the word of God takes root in the heart, and brings forth fruit, the heart must be like the good ground, and free from passion; and when carefully watched, it will bring forth fruit in patience, that is, it will finally succeed in overcoming all obstacles, and in bearing fruit for life everlasting.

In regard to the fruit brought forth by the word of God falling upon good ground, our Saviour distinguishes the different effects of the divine word according to the quality of the soil. St. Matthew says: (Chap. 13.) “And they brought forth fruit, some an hundred fold, some sixty fold, and some thirty fold.” Upon this, St. Jerome says: “It is to be observed, that our Lord speaks of three different effects produced by the heavenly seed, when falling upon the bad, as well as upon the good ground. By falling upon the bad ground, was meant that which fell on the wayside, upon the rock, and among the thorns; while that falling upon the good ground brought forth fruit, some an hundred fold, some sixty, and some thirty fold.”

According to the explanation of St. Augustin, and other Fathers of the Church, by the hundred-fold fruit we understand the holy martyrs, by the sixty fold, the holy virgins and those who renounce the world, and finally by the thirty-fold the good and pious Christians living in the world.

The contents of to-day's Gospel correspond also in a beautiful manner with those of last Sunday. Our Saviour in the parable of the laborers in the vineyard points out to us the great truth, that the fact of our being called by God, is not all-sufficient, but that man must willingly follow the divine calling and enter into the vineyard of the Lord, that is, into the kingdom of God upon earth, and work and toil every day and hour of his earthly existence, in order

to receive his eternal reward in the world to come. In the same manner does He teach us by the parable of the sower, that the announcement of heavenly truth on the part of God, and the mere hearing of it on the part of man, is by no means sufficient to procure for him the fruit of eternal life, but that man must work also, and endeavor, with God's assistance, to apply the heavenly doctrine to his life, thus reaping fruits for eternity.

The parable of the sower, treating upon the different effects of the word of God in the hearts of men, is placed before us so that we may derive advantage from it, and because during the holy season of Lent, which is fast approaching, the word of God is preached oftener, in order that the faithful may have a better opportunity to consider the lessons contained in the different Gospels, and thus be enabled to attain greater Christian perfection. .

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## QUINQUAGESIMA SUNDAY.

INTROIT OF THE MASS.—Ps. 30.

“Be thou unto me a God, a protector, and a place of refuge, to save me: for thou art my strength and my refuge, and for thy name's sake thou wilt be my leader, and wilt nourish me. In thee, O Lord, have I hoped, let me never be confounded: deliver me in thy justice, and set me free.” Glory be to the Father, &c.

These words, spoken with confidence to the Lord by the royal prophet in the desert when persecuted by Saul, should be repeated with the same confidence by Christians in their manifold troubles of soul and body, especially during this holy season.

### PRAYER.

Mercifully hear our prayers, O Lord, we beseech Thee, and, absolving us from the bonds of sin, preserve us from all adversity. Through our Lord. Amen.

EPISTLE.—1 Cor. 13: 1-13.

“Brethren: If I speak with the tongues of men, and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal. And if I should have prophecy, and should know all mysteries, and all knowledge, and if I should have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing. And if I should distribute all my goods to feed the poor, and if I should deliver my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me



nothing. Charity is patient, is kind: charity envieth not, dealeth not perversely, is not puffed up, is not ambitious, seeketh not her own, is not provoked to anger, thinketh no evil, rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth with the truth: beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things. Charity never falleth away: whether prophecies shall be made void, or tongues shall cease, or knowledge shall be destroyed. For we know in part, and we prophesy in part. But when that which is perfect is come, that which is in part shall be done away. When I was a child, I spoke as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child. But when I became a man, I put away the things of a child. We see now through a glass in a dark manner: but then face to face. Now I know in part: but then I shall know even as I am known. And now there remain, faith, hope, charity, these three: but the greater of these is charity."

In these words the Apostle speaks of the excellence and high value, as well as of the attributes of charity. In harmony with the Saviour Himself, who declared charity to be the first commandment and the compendium of the whole law, St. Paul says that charity excels all other virtues; that without it the greatest excellence which could be gained by man, even the gift of tongues, of prophecy, and the power of working miracles, would be of no value to him; that the performance of the greatest and most noble deeds, the distributing of goods to the poor, and the sacrifice of life, and even suffering the most cruel martyrdom, will be worthless, and have no merit in the sight of God, if it is not done from the purest love towards God and our neighbor. As a special distinction, belonging to the virtue of charity, the Apostle declares that while all the honors of man pass away, such as the gift of tongues, prophecies, and knowledge, while faith and hope will cease—faith, by being changed into intuition, and hope into possession—charity will never cease, but remain for ever, since the happiness of the just consists in seeing, possessing, and loving God; thus remaining united for ever in the bonds of love with Him and with each other.

The Epistle of to-day therefore admonishes us, in view of the infinite love of God towards us, as revealed in the passion and death of His only begotten Son, to strive for and attain that most sublime of all virtues, charity; and that we should practice the good and pious works which the Church recommends us to do during this holy season—praying, fasting, and alms-giving, as well as other works of mortification and self-denial. They must be performed without pride, without selfishness and vain-glory, and in the pure spirit of charity; so that they may be pleasing to God, and we be enabled to receive our reward in eternal happiness.

## GOSPEL.—Luke. 18: 31-43.

“At that time: Jesus took unto him the twelve, and said to them: Behold we go up to Jerusalem, and all things shall be accomplished which were written by the prophets concerning the Son of Man. For he shall be delivered to the Gentiles, and shall be mocked, and scourged, and spit upon: and after they have scourged him, they will put him to death, and the third day he shall rise again. And they understood none of these things, and this word was hid from them, and they understood not the things that were said. Now it came to pass when he drew nigh to Jericho, a certain blind man sat by the wayside, begging. And when he heard the multitude passing by, he asked what this meant. And they told him that Jesus of Nazareth was passing by. And he cried out, saying: Jesus, son of David, have mercy on me. And they that went before, rebuked him, that he should hold his peace. But he cried out much more: Son of David, have mercy on me. And Jesus standing, commanded him to be brought unto him. And when he was come near, he asked him, saying: What wilt thou that I do to thee? But he said: Lord, that I may see. And Jesus said to him: Receive thy sight: thy faith hath made thee whole. And immediately he saw, and followed him, glorifying God. And all the people, when they saw it, gave praise to God.”

The event mentioned in this Gospel, happened on the last journey of our Saviour to Jerusalem, a short time before His sufferings and death. He had twice before predicted His passion, death, and resurrection to His disciples, but now He announces it to them for the third time, even mentioning the particular circumstances.

His intention was to prepare His disciples for this painful event, giving them to understand that He was to suffer not by compulsion, but by His own free will, as had been predicted by the Prophets of the old law, and which He Himself had known beforehand, according to His omniscience; and to tell them that he was now ready and willing to deliver Himself up into the hands of His enemies. At the same time, in order to strengthen the faith of His disciples when they should see Him suffering and dying, He announced to them His resurrection, as the greatest and most glorious wonder of His omnipotence, which more than anything else would prove His divinity, and confirm the truth of His words, and thus strengthen their belief and confidence in Him.

The Saviour, however, by so calmly predicting the cruel treatment that awaited Him, wished to encourage us, as His followers and disciples, to endure with patience and resignation to the will of God the manifold sufferings, tribulations, and adversities imposed upon us by an all-wise providence, thus making them meritorious in the sight of God, and leading us to perfection and eternal life.

The disciples, still filled with worldly desires and affections, and with wrong

prejudices and expectations in regard to the kingdom which their Master was to establish, did not as yet understand the true meaning of this prophecy of the Saviour. They could not comprehend that He was really going to Jerusalem to deliver Himself up willingly to such ignominy and shame, and to such a disgraceful and horrible death. The Saviour, therefore, immediately after the prophecy, wrought a miracle by restoring sight to a blind man, in order to impress the truth of His words upon the hearts of His disciples, and to induce them to believe in the prophecy, which they did not yet understand.

The holy Pope Gregory the Great, referring to the above, says: "Our Redeemer, who foresaw that the minds of His disciples would be troubled by His approaching passion, announced to them that the time of His sufferings had come, but assured them also of the glory of His resurrection, so that, if they should see Him die according to the prophecy, they should not doubt of His resurrection. But as the disciples could not comprehend the words of this mystery, a miracle is performed. In their presence a blind man recovers his sight, so that those who could not understand the words of the divine mystery, might be confirmed in their belief by heavenly deeds. But," continues the same holy Father, "the miracles of our Lord and Saviour, beloved brethren, are to be understood in such a manner, that we not only believe them as having taken place, but also that they contain a signification for us. His works exhibit not only His power, but are also full of mysterious signification. Who the blind man was, we do not know, but we do know what he signifies by the mystery. The blind man represents mankind, excluded in the persons of our first parents from the joys of heaven, deprived of the glory and splendor of heavenly light, and dwelling in the darkness of perdition, but who are at length enlightened by the presence of the Saviour."

It must be also remarked, that when Jesus is said to have approached Jericho, the blind man received his sight. Jericho means moon; but the moon is in the sacred writings compared to the decline of life, because she decreases at certain times, thus signifying the waning of life. When God approaches Jericho, the blind man receives his sight, because when the Lord took upon Himself our humanity, mankind recovered the light which they had lost; because by the very fact of Christ's suffering, man has come into possession of things belonging to God. It is further said of the blind man, that he sat on the highway, begging; for the eternal truth Himself says: "I am the way."

The Church presents to us on this, the last Sunday before Lent, the Gospel wherein the Saviour predicts His sufferings and death, because it should be the principal object of our meditation during this holy season. According to the will of the Church we should commence to-day with this meditation. We should bring before our minds all the sorrows and afflictions, all the ignominy and contempt, all the mockery and scorn, which the God-man suffered for us in the last days of His life upon earth, commencing with His sufferings in the garden, and



ending with His death upon Golgatha. By these meditations we will be strengthened, first in our love for Him, who, out of love for us, delivered Himself up to such a cruel death; secondly, we will hate sin the more, because it was the cause of our Saviour's passion and death; and, thirdly, we will learn to suffer our own afflictions with patience and resignation, endeavoring thus to become more and more like our divine Lord, and participate thereby in the fruits of the redemption.

## CARNIVAL.

THE Catholic Church, as we have already stated, endeavors for several weeks before Lent, by her offices, to lead the faithful to the consideration of earnest truths, thus preparing them gradually for a worthy celebration of the holy season. We see the world, on the contrary, inviting us to indulge in pleasures and rejoicings of all kinds, in what is called the time of Carnival, which commences immediately before Lent, or, as it is customary in some places, at the very beginning of the civil year.

The name "carnival" is derived from the Latin "*carni vale*," that is, farewell to flesh, thereby indicating that Lent is near, when the use of meat is forbidden.

It appears very natural, that man, before a time of penance and abstinence, should give himself up to simple pleasures, as long as they are not forbidden, and are within the bounds of moderation and decency. The practice can not be censured or objected to, but on the contrary it can be permitted to the Christian, provided he does not neglect higher duties, or do any thing endangering the salvation of his soul. In the sacred writings innocent enjoyments are permitted. In relation to this the wise man says: "All things have their season; a time to weep, and a time to laugh; a time to mourn, and a time to dance." (Eccles. 3: 1-4.) And in the same sense St. Paul says: "Rejoice in the Lord always; again I say, rejoice." (Phil. 4: 4.) "Always rejoice!" (1 Thessal. 5: 16.)

The origin, however, of the Carnival, is not very creditable, nor is the manner in which it is too often kept to be approved of. The observance of the time of Carnival comes to us from the heathens, and was generally accompanied by great excesses. We find that among most of the pagan nations of old, at the end of winter, or at the approach of spring, principally in the month of February, national feasts were celebrated in honor of certain gods.

Among the Greeks and Romans, and other southern nations, these feasts were dedicated to Bacchus, the god of the grape or wine—hence the Bacchan-

alia,—and to Pan or Lupercus, the god of herds and flocks—hence the Lupercalia. At these feasts men and women, who had become intoxicated in honor of the god, ran about the city in the wildest manner, dressed in deer skins, or crowned with wreaths of ivy; some riding on asses, others leading rams, accompanied by persons playing different musical instruments, and singing indecent songs. The excesses committed on these occasions were of such a character that even the heathen Senate of Rome were compelled to suppress these feasts.

It is a well known fact that when usages and customs, especially national feasts, have taken root in the hearts of the people, it is a difficult thing to destroy them, no matter how wicked they may have become, as was the case with these feasts. Even after the establishment of Christianity among them, the pagans continued to observe their usual feasts, especially that of the Bacchanalia. Although not celebrated in honor of the idols, they were in substance still the same, and many Christians were known to participate in them. The Pastors of the Church, especially the Holy Fathers, denounced and wrote against these relics of paganism. Many laws were issued against them, and severe punishments inflicted upon transgressors.

Not only in Italy and Greece, and other southern countries, but in Germany also, these relics of paganism remained even after the introduction of the Gospel; and among them was the celebration of the so-called feasts of Spurcalia, held in February, in which month the old pagan Germans offered sacrifice to the sun, whom they worshiped as a deity, because he commences to ascend higher in the heavens. The peasants were very much attached to the customs enjoyed by them at this time, especially as they had not much work to do in the fields.

The ancient pagan Germans celebrated a feast in January, which was called "Irias" (a German word, the meaning of which is not known,) or "paganus cursus," when old and young, men and women, disguised themselves in torn clothes, or even as animals. On these occasions many excesses were committed. This feast is even now observed in some parts of Germany.

Many decrees have been passed by the German Bishops and Councils against these abuses, and every exertion has been made to suppress them. In Italy, where these old pagan customs were most prevalent, public devotions were instituted to prevent Christians from taking part in them.

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## THE HOLY SEASON OF LENT.

By fasting we understand in general abstinence from food, allowed at other times, but at certain times forbidden, for the attainment of a great and religious object. It is necessary to have a good motive in abstaining from food, otherwise it would be useless to observe the fast, since abstinence in itself possesses no moral worth. Those who ridicule the custom of fasting by declaring that the use of food, permitted at one time, can not be forbidden at another, and should therefore be always allowed, only show their entire ignorance in regard to the ecclesiastical fast, since in all ages, as well as in the Catholic Church, fasting proceeds from purely religious motives, principally in obedience to the commandments of God and the Church, for the purpose of subduing sensual inclinations, for the mortification of the flesh, in order that the spirit may obtain the mastery; which result can be attained by performing either voluntary or prescribed works of penance.

There are in general two kinds of fasts. The first consists in abstaining from all food during a certain time, which is properly called fasting; and the other consists in abstaining from certain food, especially the use of flesh-meat, which is properly called abstinence.

Both fasts are observed from the same motive, and have the same end in view; that is, to abstain, out of religious respect, from food otherwise allowed; they differ only in form, but in substance they are the same, as both are sometimes united. According to the former severe discipline of the Church, all fast days were also days of abstinence; that is, the use of flesh-meat was not allowed on days when the use of any other food was partially prohibited.

In looking for the origin of fasting, we find it a much older and more venerable custom than its enemies and opposers would imagine. It was originally instituted and prescribed by God Himself. The first command which God gave to our first parents in paradise, immediately after their creation, saying: "Of every tree of paradise thou shalt eat; but of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat."—(Gen. 2: 16, 17.)—was nothing else than a command of abstinence, similar to the precept still existing in the Catholic Church. For the Lord God certainly did not forbid them to use fruit of the tree because it would have injured their health, but only to try their obedience, and to give them an opportunity to prove themselves faithful and obedient servants of God; and when, contrary to God's will, they ate of the forbidden fruit, their guilt consisted not in having taken food hurtful to their health, but in transgressing the express command of God; thus proving themselves to be disobedient servants of God.

In the history of the old law, we again find, during the existence of the natural law—from Adam to Noah—by a decree of God, another law of abstinence,



which is almost the same as the one existing now among us; the only difference was that it was not limited, as with us, to some days, but that it existed without intermission. During the whole period of two thousand years the use of vegetables only was permitted to men. After the deluge, however, the Lord permitted Noah and his seed to use as food the fowls of the air, the beasts upon the earth, and the fishes of the sea; but it was expressly forbidden to eat flesh in which the blood remained. (Gen. 9: 2-4.)

In a manifold manner, and on different occasions, we find, especially amongst the Jews, the precept of fasting and abstinence generally prescribed by the Lord Himself, for the purpose of advancing the interests of religion and morality. When Moses was on Mount Sinai, where he was to receive the Ten Commandments of God, he fasted for forty days and forty nights, without taking any food during that time, the Lord preserving him in a wonderful manner. (Exod. 34.)

The Prophet Elias, persecuted by the wicked Queen Jezabel, escaped to the desert, where he fasted the same length of time; the Lord preserved him also miraculously. (3 Kings 19.) These two great men are therefore in this, as well as in many other respects, types of the Lord, who, before His public appearance, fasted for forty days and forty nights. (Matt. 4.)

King David also fasted on different occasions. He fasted a whole day when he heard of the defeat of the Israelites and of the death of Saul and his sons; he fasted during the sickness of one of his children, in order to obtain health for it from God; he also fasted on account of his sins, according to his own words: "I was clothed with hair-cloth, and humbled my soul with fasting." (Ps. 34: 13, 14.) "My knees are weakened through fasting." (Ps. 108: 24.)

Not only individuals, but the whole people fasted on different occasions. They considered it as a wholesome and meritorious practice, which was pleasing to God; as a means of reconciliation between an offended Lord and the sinner, and as a means of averting dangers, and of obtaining the Divine assistance in important affairs. In time of war, or when any other danger threatened, a general fast was prescribed throughout the whole land, to avert the danger, and to secure God's assistance against the enemy. If they were defeated in battle, or any other misfortune befell them, a general fast was observed. This was done when the Israelites, during their Babylonian captivity, were in danger of being exterminated through the crafty designs of their bitter enemy, the infamous Haman. By order of Queen Esther the whole nation was obliged to keep the strictest fast for thirty days, so as to avert the great danger. God had mercy on the people, and they were saved. (Esther, 4.) A solemn fast also was instituted, by the decree of God Himself, in commemoration of certain unhappy events, and these fasts were kept yearly by the whole people. In the same manner the Lord instituted, while the Israelites remained in the desert, the so-called DAY OF ATONEMENT, called also the LONG FAST, in memory of a wicked

deed committed by the sons of Aaron at the offering up of the sacrifice, and their subsequent punishment; the people, however, remaining unpunished. On that day the people were not allowed to eat from the evening of one day until the evening of the next. (Lev. 16 and 23.)

A general and solemn fast was afterwards instituted by the express command of the Lord, in memory of the Babylonian captivity of the Jews. (Zach. 7, 8.)

Even the pagan inhabitants of the great city of Ninive observed a general fast, by order of the king, which was extended even to domestic animals, in order to avert the ruin of the city, which Jonas the prophet had foretold by God's command, on account of the wickedness of the inhabitants; but the Lord had mercy on them, and did not punish them. (Jonas, 3.)

As in the old, so we find in the new law, the fast observed not only by individuals, but by whole nations. Anna, the pious widow, who, together with Simeon, had the happiness of seeing the Infant Jesus at His presentation in the temple, served God, according to the Holy Scriptures, day and night by fasting and prayer. (Luke 2: 37.)

St. John the Baptist, the greatest of all prophets and the precursor of the Lord, always kept the strictest fast and abstinence, living on bread and wild honey, the simplest of all food. (Matt. 3: 4.) The Saviour Himself fasted forty days and forty nights (not touching food) when He prepared Himself in the desert for His public life. (Matt. 4: 2.—Luke 4: 2.) The pharisees also fasted very strictly, and sometimes oftener than the law prescribed; and our Saviour, when reproaching them for it, did not disapprove of fasting in itself, but only of the hypocrisy with which they fasted, and by which they lost all the merits of their fasting before God. It is true, our Saviour observed no particular fast during His three years of public life—the Evangelists at least do not mention His having done so—but in His manner of life He was so abstemious and mortified, that it was nothing but a continual fast; and He was always ready to abstain from any kind of food, if He was engaged in saving man. His conduct when meeting the Samaritan woman at Jacob's well, is a most beautiful illustration of this truth, and he must have practised the same on many other similar occasions, making it the maxim, as it were, of His whole life, when He said to His disciples: "My meat is, to do the will of Him that sent me, that I may perfect His work." (John 4: 34.)

Neither did our Saviour oblige His disciples to fast; but when the pharisees reproached Him for it, He gave the reason for it, saying: "Can the children of the bridegroom mourn (by which is meant fasting) as long as the bridegroom is with them? But the days will come when the bridegroom shall be taken away from them, and then they shall fast." (Matt. 9: 15) And indeed the disciples of the Lord fasted afterwards on different occasions, when the bridegroom was taken away from them, after our Saviour ascended into heaven, as

can be seen in the Acts and Epistles of the Apostles. They fasted in times of sadness and adversity, as well as on other occasions, and when they were in need of divine assistance, such as the establishment of new communities, the appointing of new pastors, &c., &c. (See Acts 12: 2-3; 13: 2; 14: 22; 2 Cor. 6: 5; 11: 27.) The Apostles prescribed also that the Christians at that time should abstain from blood and from things strangled. (Acts 15: 20, 28, 29.)

According to what we have said, it is only natural to infer that fasting, as a religious practice, having existed at all times, even from the creation of man, amongst the worshipers of the true God, has also existed in the Catholic Church from the very beginning. Fasting, therefore, has been always practiced in the Catholic Church as a wholesome work of penance, mortification, and perfection, and was kept with more austerity in the first centuries, when the zeal of the faithful was greater, than it is among us of the present day. Their fasting was voluntary, and not a special precept of the Church. In the third century, however, certain rules and regulations were made in regard to fast-days, and the manner of observing them. At the same time the Holy Fathers endeavored to recommend fasting to the Christians, and to incite them to the faithful practice of it. St. Basil says: "You know, the flesh is opposed to the spirit, and the spirit to the flesh. Since both are then in opposition, let us remove the lust of the flesh, and increase the strength of the spirit, by obtaining, through fasting, the means necessary to destroy the desire of the flesh."

St. Augustin says: "Fasting elevates our spirit to God, subjects the flesh to the spirit, and fills our hearts with sorrow and humility; it puts out the fire of concupiscence, and kindles in us the light of chastity."

St. Chrysostom says: "Fasting is the special work of a higher wisdom. It changes men into angels, and overcomes the incorporeal powers. To Satan nothing is more terrible than a man full of faith, who, praying fervently to God, mortifies his flesh by fasting."

We have already spoken in the introduction in regard to the days and seasons upon which fast and abstinence are observed, either voluntary or by command of the Church. The early Christians fasted on the Vigils of Festivals and on Ember days, and independent of these fast-days, there were in the earlier time of Christianity so-called stationary fasts. In this connection the word "station" means a church-service, combined with a fast, commencing early in the morning, and ending at three o'clock in the afternoon. The stationary fast-days were: **WEDNESDAY**—observed especially during Advent, because upon that day the high council had decreed the death of Christ, and on that day the treason of Judas had been agreed upon by the high-priests. **FRIDAY**—the day of our Lord's death; and **SATURDAY**—because on that day our Lord was laid in the sepulchre. The Greeks, however, never kept Saturday as a day of fast.

The season of Lent has always been observed by the faithful as a time of the strictest fast, even from the days of the Apostles, not only in commemora-



tion of the fast of our Saviour in the desert, but also as a season of meditation upon the sufferings and death of our Lord, as well as of His glorious resurrection. During this whole time the most rigid fast and abstinence was observed. The use of flesh-meat was not only forbidden, but every thing connected with it, such as milk, butter, cheese, eggs, lard, &c. In the same manner the use of wine, or any other strong drink, was forbidden; bread, fruits, vegetables, and water were only permitted to be used, and even this slight refreshment could not be taken—at least in the earliest times—but once a day, and then only after sunset. No one was dispensed from this strict fast, unless the case was most urgent. Even soldiers, travelers, mariners, and other mechanics were bound to keep it. To children only, and to the sick and feeble, some indulgence was allowed. At the same time all amusements, weddings, the holding of courts, and fairs, were strictly forbidden. To the faithful ample opportunities were given at this season, more than at any other, to attend the holy sacrifice of the Mass, to hear sermons, and take part in prayers and other public devotions; they were also most earnestly invited to participate in all the religious services of the Church. Every unjustifiable transgression of the fast was punished most severely by the Church, and sometimes even by the civil law. Clergymen who violated the regulation were deposed, and laymen excommunicated. In Denmark, England, and Ireland, the transgressor was obliged to pay a fine, or was otherwise punished; but the greatest punishment was inflicted upon those who were guilty of excesses or of any other vice during the holy season of Lent. According to the Hungarian law, he who transgressed the lenten regulation, was compelled to leave the country without being allowed to take any thing with him. Neglecting to attend a divine service during Lent was punished by the ecclesiastical as well as by the civil law.

From this we see plainly that the law of fasting was strictly kept, not only in the East, and by the early Christians, but also in other countries, even in the North, and among those who were converted from paganism to Catholicity. Some mitigation of the fast was permitted for a time in northern countries, on account of the severity of the climate; but even their fasts were much more strict than those observed by us at the present day.

But when in the course of time the zeal of the faithful grew cold, and violations of the fast became more frequent, the Church allowed dispensations to be granted. The first dispensation, granted in the fourteenth century, consisted in permitting the principal meal to be taken at noon, instead of in the evening; but at the same time the faithful were not allowed to take any thing during the rest of the day. Afterwards a small COLLATION was allowed in the evening, consisting of some refreshment. The word collation derives its origin from a custom prevalent at that time in convents. It was customary for the monks to meet in the evening during Lent, as well as at other times, and for one of them to read passages from some spiritual book. These readings were called

"*Collationes Patrum*," (extracts from the Holy Fathers,) after which, according to dispensation, they partook of some refreshment, consisting of dried fruits and a piece of bread. From these spiritual readings the assemblies of the monks were called *COLLATIONS*, as well as the refreshment afterwards taken. The word collation is still in use by the Church, and by it we understand the third part of an ordinary meal, to be taken in the evening during the season of Lent.

Other dispensations were granted in times of famine, pestilence, or war, when the use of milk, butter, lard, eggs, and articles of food, otherwise prohibited, was allowed; but those who were able to pay, were obliged to pay a certain sum for their dispensations, which money was used by the Church for wise purposes. The money was given to poor congregations, and applied to the erection of church-towers; hence the towers of the churches of Rouen and Bourges in France are called the butter-towers, because they were built with the money received from the faithful for the permission to use butter on fast days.

These dispensations increased from time to time, so that at present our fasts can not be compared with that of former times. The Greeks, however, even at the present day, strictly observe their fasts; the use of flesh-meat is allowed to them only on one hundred and twenty days during the whole year.

The Church, however, as we have already mentioned, was not content with recommending to the faithful a total or partial abstinence from food, but she also inculcated at all times the necessity of the faithful uniting with the fast of the BODY a SPIRITUAL fast, that is an abstinence from sin and injustice, and an increased zeal for doing good, thus making fasting a means of obtaining virtue and everlasting life.

The Church expresses her meaning in a few but appropriate words, used in the preface of the Mass for Lent, saying: "Who (God) by bodily fasting dost repress vice, elevate the mind, bestow virtue and rewards." The writings of the Holy Fathers are also full of the most beautiful lessons and admonitions, addressed by them to the faithful.

The holy Pope Leo the Great says: "Fasting does not consist alone in abstaining from food, for it would be fruitless to deprive your body of nourishment, if you do not keep your soul from sin, and your tongue from slander."

St. Augustin says: "It is a great and meritorious act to abstain from sin, and to renounce the pleasures of the world, in order that our fasting may not be rejected, like that of the Jews: for what does it profit us if we deprive our body of food, but yet fill our soul with sin?"

St. Jerome says in the same sense: "What does it profit our body to fast, if our soul is swollen with pride and other sins? Fasting means to abstain from sin: he who fasts must govern his temper, become meek, and possess a contrite heart; he must avoid forbidden pleasures, have the eternal Judge and His just

judgment always before his eyes, have contempt for earthly benefits, be liberal towards the poor, and be at peace with his neighbor."

It was at all times the will of the Church, and therefore the subject of severe admonitions from her pastors, that the faithful should, together with fasting, exercise works of kindness and benevolence towards the poor and needy; thus making their voluntary abstinence the more meritorious by giving to the poor what they desired to keep themselves. The poor, therefore, were at all times dispensed from fasting, because the season of fasting should be a time of joy to those who had during the whole year to suffer want and privation, by receiving in a fuller measure the alms of the rich. The Church insisted so strictly upon this injunction of alms-giving, that she declared fasting useless, if not accompanied by alms-deeds.

We find a very beautiful instruction upon this subject in one of the most ancient writers of the Church, in those of the Pastor of Hermas, who lived in the time of the Apostles, and whom the angel instructed as to what he should write. He says: "Count up the expenses of the meals which you have been accustomed to take on other days, and give the money which they would have cost to the widows, to the orphans, and to the poor. Thus you will observe the true fast, and the prayers of those who are fed by you will ascend to God in your behalf. Your offerings will be pleasing to God, and He will reward you."

From what we have said, it follows that fasting, in accordance with the spirit of the holy Catholic Church, is indeed a very judicious and wholesome practice. It is pleasing to God, and one of the best and most efficacious means by which to obtain virtue. Such a truly Christian fast, united with sorrow for our sins, with works of charity, with the constant control of our passions, with devout prayer, with a frequent attendance at the services of the Church, and especially by attentively meditating upon the sufferings and death of Christ, is certainly the best way to prepare ourselves for the proper celebration of the great mysteries of which the Church reminds us at the end of the holy season of Lent and on Easter. In order that we may be encouraged to keep Lent according to the spirit of the Church, let us meditate upon the beautiful sermon preached by St. Augustin to the faithful at the beginning of Lent. He says:

"To-day we commence the solemn fast of forty days. You will be instructed concerning it by public exhortations, so that the words of God, as explained by us, may nourish your soul, while the body is obliged to fast, and that the inner man, first strengthened with heavenly food, may earnestly begin its outward mortifications, and persevere in them with more vigor. It becomes us, therefore, to fasten ourselves, as it were, upon a cross, to crucify our criminal desires, since, in the days which are approaching, we will commemorate the sufferings of our crucified Lord; for the Apostle says: 'They that are Christ's, have crucified their flesh, with the vices and concupiscences.' (Gal. 5: 24.) Upon this cross the Christian should remain all his life-time, because it stands between



him and temptation; for the hour never will come in which we can take out the nails by which we are fastened to the cross, according to the words: 'Pierce thou my flesh with (the nails of) thy fear.' By the word flesh is meant sensual pleasure; the nails are the commandments of justice; with these commandments the fear of the Lord fastens us to the cross, presenting us as a sacrifice pleasing to God. Therefore the Apostle says: 'I beseech you, brethren, by the mercy of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, pleasing to God.' This cross of which the Christian is not ashamed, but in which he glories, according to the words of the Apostle: 'God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified to me, and I to the world;'—this cross, I say, is not to be used only for a space of forty days, but for a whole life-time, as represented by the forty days. It is for this reason that Moses, Elias, and our Lord fasted forty days, that we may plainly see that, following the example of Moses, Elias, and the Saviour, that is according to the law, the prophets, and the Gospel, it should be our principal object not to be formed according to the spirit of the world, but to crucify the old man within us; living not in rioting, drunkenness, or impurity; not in anger or contention, but putting on Jesus Christ, as a new garment of justice. Dear Christians! we should always live thus; we should never descend from this cross, if we do not wish to be covered with the dust of the earth. If it is necessary for us to observe this rule during our whole life-time, how much more should we observe it in these days of fasting and prayer!

"We should be temperate at all times, and in all things; but especially in these days. You, who fast on other days, fast the more now; show yourselves, above all things, as of ONE MIND; all faithful, possessing one faith, all pilgrims, seeking after heaven, all brethren, loving one another; no one must envy another for the gift which he does not himself possess, nor indulge in ridicule at the expense of another. The spiritual gifts which you find in others, prize as your own; and whoever loves you, let him consider what you possess as his own. Under the pretext of fasting do not introduce all manner of delicacies upon your table, because the use of meat is forbidden, nor costly drinks, because you can not drink wine. This would be nothing more than putting on the mask of mortification. To the holy all food is good, but to the depraved appetite nothing is acceptable. But, above all, let your fasting consist in abstaining from quarrels and all manner of discord; forgive, and it shall be forgiven; give and it shall be given to you; to forgive the erring, and to give to the destitute, are the wings of prayer, by which we soar up to heaven and reach God."

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## ASH-WEDNESDAY.

LENT commences with Ash-Wednesday, which is so called because on this day the faithful have their heads sprinkled with blessed ashes. The Catholic Church could not commence Lent, the time of penance, mortification, and earnest meditation, more appropriately than with this beautiful custom, which is so full of meaning. The ashes are an emblem that all the things of this world are frail and perishable, and that the body of man, which in consequence of sin is subject to death, will return to dust.

We find even in the earliest times the custom of strewing ashes, or sitting upon them, used as a sign of sadness or misfortune, but especially as a sign of grief or sorrow for sins committed. During the time of their captivity, the Jews, we are told, were threatened with extermination through the malice of Aman. Mardochai, when he heard these things, rent his garments and put on sackcloth, strewing ashes on his head, and the whole nation did the same. In his lamentations regarding the destruction of Jerusalem, Jeremias, the prophet, says: "The ancients of the daughter of Sion sit upon the ground: they have held their peace, they have sprinkled their heads with dust, they are girded with hair-cloth." (Lament. 2: 10.)

When king David had grievously offended God, and the Lord had reminded him of his guilt through His prophet, he did penance in sackcloth and in ashes; he even says in a figurative sense, that he ate ashes like bread. Even the pagan king of Ninive, having heard the admonition of Jonas the prophet, descended from his throne, cast aside his royal robes and clothed himself in sackcloth, and sat upon ashes, thereby showing publicly his grief and sorrow. In the earliest times of Christianity a similar custom existed. Persons who had committed grievous sins, were according to the strict discipline of the Church, obliged to do public penance; they had to remain at the door of the church clothed in sackcloth, and with ashes strewn upon their heads, and implore those who enter to pray for them. Zealous Christians voluntarily observed this custom by sprinkling their heads with ashes, especially on fast days as a sign of sorrow for their sins. It was in this manner that the custom of strewing ashes upon the heads of the faithful on the first day of Lent became introduced into the Church, as a warning that all earthly things will pass away, as an exhortation to penance and amendment of life, and at the same time to show our contempt for the goods of this world, and a desire for things eternal.

The ashes used by the Church for this purpose are made from the blessed palms, left from the preceding Palm-sunday, which palms are burnt; the ashes are blessed before the Mass by the Priest, who while blessing them says the following beautiful prayer:—

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"Hear us, O Lord, for Thy mercy is kind; look upon us, O Lord, according to the multitude of Thy tender mercies; save me, O God, for the waters have come in even unto my soul."

"Almighty, eternal God, spare those who are penitent, be merciful to those who supplicate Thee, and vouchsafe to send Thy holy angel from heaven, to bless ✕ and sanctify these ashes, that they may be a wholesome remedy to all who humbly implore Thy holy name, and conscious of their sins, accuse themselves, deploring their crimes before Thy divine clemency, or humbly and earnestly beseech Thy bountiful loving kindness; and grant through the invocation of Thy most holy name, that whoever shall be sprinkled with them, for the remission of their sins, may receive both health of body and safety of soul."

"O God, who desirest not the death, but the repentance of sinners, benignantly look down upon the frailty of human nature, and in Thy mercy vouchsafe to bless ✕ these ashes, which we design to place upon our heads, in token of our humility, and to obtain forgiveness; that we, who know that we are but dust, and for the demerits of our wickedness are to return to dust, may deserve to obtain of Thy mercy the pardon of all sins, and the rewards promised to penitents. Through Christ, our Lord. Amen."

"O God, who art moved by humiliation and appeased by satisfaction, incline the ear of Thy mercy to our prayers, and favorably pour forth upon the heads of Thy servants, sprinkled with these ashes, the grace of Thy blessing; that Thou mayest both fill them with the spirit of compunction, and effectually grant what they have justly prayed for; and decree what Thou hast granted may be permanently established and remain inviolate. Through Christ, our Lord."

"Almighty and eternal God, who didst grant the remedy of Thy pardon to the Ninevites doing penance in ashes and sackcloth, mercifully grant that we may so imitate them in our attire as to follow them in obtaining forgiveness. Through Christ."

While the people are receiving the ashes, the choir sings as follows: "Let us change our garments for ashes and sackcloth, let us fast and lament before the Lord, for our God is plenteous in mercy to forgive our sins. Between the porch and altar, the Priests, the Lord's ministers, shall weep and shall say: Spare, O Lord, spare Thy people, and shut not the mouths of them that sing to Thee, O Lord. Let us amend and do better for those things in which we have sinned through ignorance, lest suddenly prevented by the day of death, we seek time for penance, and be not able to find it. Attend, O Lord, and have mercy, for we have sinned against Thee. Help us, O God, our Saviour, and for the honor of Thy name, O Lord, deliver us."

When sprinkling the ashes upon the heads of the faithful, the priest only repeats the words spoken by the Lord to Adam after his fall, announcing to him, that among other punishments death would be his portion: "Remember,



man, that thou art dust, and unto dust thou shalt return." (Memento homo, quia pulvis es, et in pulverem reverteris.)

## INTROIT OF THE MASS.

"Thou hast mercy upon us all, O Lord, and hatest none of the things which Thou hast made, overlooking the sins of men for the sake of repentance, and sparing them, for Thou art the Lord our God. Have mercy on me, O God, for my soul trusteth in Thee." Glory be to the Father.

These words of the holy Scriptures, expressing the mercy of God for repentant sinners, can be very properly used by the faithful (on this first day of Lent) to implore with a contrite heart the pardon and mercy of the Lord.

## PRAYER.

"Grant to Thy faithful, O Lord, that they may begin the venerable solemnities of fasting with becoming piety, and perform them with undisturbed devotion, through Christ."

## EPISTLE.—Joel, 2: 12-19.

"Thus saith the Lord: Be converted to me with all your heart, in fasting, and in weeping, and in mourning. And rend your hearts, and not your garments, and turn to the Lord your God: for he is gracious and merciful, patient and rich in mercy, and ready to repent of the evil. Who knoweth but he will return, and forgive, and leave a blessing behind him, sacrifice and libation to the Lord your God? Blow the trumpet in Sion, sanctify a fast, call a solemn assembly. Gather together the people, sanctify the church, assemble the ancients, gather together the little ones, and them that suck at the breasts: let the bridegroom go forth from his bed, and the bride out of her bride-chamber. Between the porch and the altar the priests, the Lord's ministers, shall weep, and shall say: Spare, O Lord, spare thy people: and give not thy inheritance to reproach, that the heathens should rule over them. Why should they say among the nations: Where is their God? The Lord hath been zealous for his land, and hath spared his people. And the Lord answered and said to his people: Behold I will send you corn, and wine, and oil, and you shall be filled with them: and I will no more make you a reproach among the nations, saith the Lord Almighty."

In this epistle the prophet, after having announced the approaching judgment of God, invites the whole people to implore God's mercy by sincere repentance, united with fasting and sacrifice; promising them that the Lord would not only hear them, but avert the punishment and bless them. It is

plain, therefore, that Christians should also apply to themselves the admonition of the prophet, especially during this holy season.

GOSPEL.—Matt. 6 : 16-21.

“At that time : Jesus said to his disciples : When you fast, be not as the hypocrites, sad. For they disfigure their faces, that they may appear unto men to fast. Amen I say to you, they have received their reward. But thou, when thou fastest, anoint thy head, and wash thy face, that thou appear not to men to fast, but to thy Father who is in secret : and thy Father who seeth in secret, will repay thee. Lay not up to yourselves treasures on earth : where the rust and moth consume, and where thieves break through and steal. But lay up to yourselves treasures in heaven : where neither rust nor moth doth consume, and where thieves do not break through, nor steal. For where thy treasure is, there is thy heart also.”

In this Gospel, taken from the Sermon on the Mount, our Saviour gives to His disciples, and at the same time to all the members of His Church, two beautiful and important instructions, which deserve our most earnest consideration. He first warns His disciples against such hypocrisy and vanity, while fasting, as was practised by the Pharisees, so as to be seen and honored by men, thus rendering their fasting worthless. According to the admonition of the Saviour, we should therefore, when fasting or practising any other work of mortification, retain outwardly our usual way of living, so that we may not appear in the eyes of others as strict observers of the fast, thus guarding against the spirit of pride creeping into our hearts under the appearance of false humility and mortification, and thereby deceiving us in regard to our real worth. St. Augustin says : “By this passage of the holy Scriptures we learn that it is possible for us to take pride, not only in the outward splendor and pomp of our mode of life, but also in the neglect with which we treat our bodies,—a pride the more dangerous because it deceives us into thinking that it is pleasing to God. He who openly indulges in extravagance of dress and other luxuries, is known to all as one who lives only for the things of this world, and therefore deceives no one by an appearance of sanctity ; but if a Christian attracts the attention of men by unnecessary exhibitions of bodily neglect, and does so not from necessity, but that he may receive the praises of men, then we can judge whether he mortifies himself out of contempt for the excessive care bestowed by some upon their bodies, or from some less worthy motive. The Lord commands us to beware of wolves coming in the clothing of sheep, and adds, that by their fruits we shall know them.”

The Saviour then warns us against the sin of avarice, and a too great desire for worldly riches, by showing us the perishable nature of earthly things ; at

the same time he admonishes us to seek after the eternal treasures of heaven, which endure for ever.

St. Chrysostom makes the following beautiful application of this admonition of the Saviour :—

“Do you wish to see the soul of an avaricious man? If so, you will find it gnawed by care, like a garment eaten by moths; corrupted by sin, and covered with rust. But not so the soul of the voluntary poor; it shines like gold, glistens like a pearl, and blooms like a rose; no moth can destroy its beauty, no thief enter, no care for temporal goods disturb its pulsation. The life of such a person is like that of angels; he is not under the dominion of evil spirits, he serves no earthly king, but only God; he lives not in the communion of men, but dwells with the angels; his treasures are not upon earth, but in heaven; he has no servant, but has made his passions his slaves; he has neither horses nor equipages; but why should he stand in need of them, who can ascend into heaven and be with Christ? Who then would not envy such blessed poverty?”

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## FRIDAY AFTER ASH-WEDNESDAY.

### INTROIT OF THE MASS.

“THE Lord hath heard, and hath had mercy on me; the Lord became my helper. I will extol Thee, O Lord, for Thou hast upheld me, and hast not made my enemies to rejoice over me.” Glory be to the Father.

In these words the royal prophet gives thanks to the Lord for having freed him from pestilence. We should in the same manner thank God for his assistance and deliverance, which He will bestow upon us, if we, like David, do penance for our sins, and serve Him faithfully.

### PRAYER.

“Regard the fast we have begun, we beseech Thee, O Lord, with kind favor; that the observance we exhibit corporally we may be able also to exercise with sincere minds. Through Christ, our Lord.”

### EPISTLE.—Isaias, 58 : 1-9.

“Thus saith the Lord God: Cry, cease not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and shew my people their wicked doings, and the house of Jacob their sins. For they seek me from day to day, and desire to know my ways, as a nation that hath done justice, and hath not forsaken the judgment of their God: they ask of me the judgments of justice: they are willing to approach to God. Why



have we fasted, and thou hast not regarded: have we humbled our souls, and thou hast not taken notice? Behold in the day of your fast your own will is found, and you exact of all your debtors. Behold you fast for debates and strife, and strike with the fist wickedly. Do not fast as you have done until this day, to make your cry to be heard on high. Is this such a fast as I have chosen: for a man to afflict his soul for a day? is this it, to wind his head about like a circle, and to spread sackcloth and ashes? wilt thou call this a fast, and a day acceptable to the Lord? Is not this rather the fast that I have chosen? loose the bands of wickedness, undo the bundles that oppress, let them that are broken go free, and break asunder every burden. Deal thy bread to the hungry, and bring the needy and the harborless into thy house: when thou shalt see one naked, cover him, and despise not thy own flesh. Then shall thy light break forth as the morning, and thy health shall speedily arise, and thy justice shall go before thy face, and the glory of the Lord shall gather thee up. Then shalt thou call, and the Lord shall hear: thou shalt cry, and he shall say: here I am. Because I thy Lord God am merciful."

This reproachful, but at the same time kind and paternal admonition, addressed by the Lord to the people of Israel—who were guilty of all manner of sins, and therefore unworthy of God's mercy and assistance—and in which He instructs them how to fast so as to be pleasing to God, contains also important truths for our consideration at this particular time. We learn from it that the strictest fast of the body has no value in the sight of God, if our minds are filled with evil thoughts, or our hearts with hatred against our neighbor; but that our fast will be pleasing to God, and useful to us, if we have charity towards all men.

GOSPEL.—Matt. 5: 43-48; 6: 1-4.

"At that time Jesus said to his disciples: You have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbor, and hate thy enemy: but I say to you, Love your enemies: do good to them that hate you: and pray for them that persecute and calumniate you: that you may be the children of your Father who is in heaven, who maketh his sun to rise upon the good, and bad, and raineth upon the just and the unjust. For if you love them that love you, what reward shall you have? do not even the publicans this? And if you salute your brethren only, what do you more? do not also the heathens this? Be you therefore perfect, as also your heavenly Father is perfect. Take heed that you do not your justice before men, to be seen by them: otherwise you shall not have a reward of your Father who is in heaven. Therefore when thou dost an almsdeed, sound not a trumpet before thee, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may be honored by men. Amen I say to you, they have received their reward. But when thou dost alms, let not thy

left hand know what thy right hand doth. That thy alms may be in secret, and thy Father, who seeth in secret, will repay thee."

Two beautiful and important lessons are contained in this Gospel, both of which are deserving of our serious consideration.

The first of these lessons refers to the great commandment of loving our neighbor, the observance of which precept must necessarily be connected with our fasting, for Almighty God assures us in the Gospel of this day, that it is both pleasing to Him and beneficial to us. Our Saviour, therefore, expressly declares it to be the duty of every Christian to observe this great commandment towards all men, without making any exception. In the old law also this commandment of love towards the neighbor was expressly defined. The Jewish scribes or doctors of the law, especially of a later period, interpreted it in a very imperfect and partial manner, declaring that by the word "neighbor" was meant their relatives and friends, whom they of course were bound to love, but asserting at the same time, that they were allowed to hate their enemies. Our Saviour, on the contrary, commands us to love our enemies, and to do good to them that hate us—a very difficult precept, in the observance of which, however, our Saviour has given us the best example, and by the fulfillment of which we will become equal to Him and our heavenly Father, and obtain thereby true perfection.

The second lesson of our Saviour corresponds with what was said to us in the Gospel for Ash-Wednesday in regard to the manner in which we should fast. He teaches us to practice other good works, especially alms-giving, without making any outward show, but rather to please God, so that we may be rewarded by Him in the world to come.

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### FRIDAY AFTER ASH-WEDNESDAY.

THIS day the Catholic Church celebrates in commemoration of the Passion of our Lord Jesus Christ.

#### INTROIT OF THE MASS.—Phil. 2.

"The Lord Jesus Christ humbled himself unto death, even the death of the cross; wherefore God hath exalted him, and hath given him a name which is above every name."—"The mercies of the Lord I will sing for ever: to generation and generation." (Ps. 88.)

In these words of the Introit we are reminded of the humility and great love of our Saviour Jesus Christ for us. Our sins were the cause of His humiliation,

and we should therefore, at this holy season especially, amend our lives, imitate our Lord in His humility, and love Him above all things.

PRAYER.

O almighty and everlasting God, who wouldst have our Saviour take flesh, and undergo the cross, for man to imitate the example of His humility, mercifully grant, that as we celebrate the solemn commemoration of His passion, so we may both deserve the instruction of patience, and the fellowship of His resurrection. Through Christ our Lord.

EPISTLE.—Zach. 12: 10; 13: 6, 7.

“Thus saith the Lord: I will pour out upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of prayers; and they shall look upon me, whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him as one mourneth for an only son; and they shall grieve over him, as the manner is to grieve for the death of the first-born. In that day there shall be a great lamentation in Jerusalem, and it shall be said: What are these wounds in the midst of thy hands? And he shall say: With these I was wounded in the house of them that loved me. Awake, oh sword, against my shepherd, and against the man that cleaveth to me, saith the Lord of hosts: strike the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered, saith the Lord Almighty.”

GOSPEL.—John 19: 28-35.

“At that time, Jesus knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the Scripture might be fulfilled, said: I thirst. Now there was a vessel set there full of vinegar. And they putting a sponge full of vinegar about hyssop, put it to his mouth. Jesus, therefore, when he had taken the vinegar, said: It is consummated. And bowing his head he gave up the ghost. Then the Jews (because it was the parascève), that the bodies might not remain upon the cross on the Sabbath-day (for that was a great Sabbath-day), besought Pilate that their legs might be broken, and that they might be taken away. The soldiers, therefore, came, and they broke the legs of the first, and of the other that was crucified with him. But after they were come to Jesus, when they saw that he was already dead, they did not break his legs. But one of the soldiers with a spear opened his side, and immediately there came out blood and water. And he that saw it hath given testimony, and his testimony is true.”

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## FIRST SUNDAY IN LENT.

THIS Sunday, called also "Invocavit," after the first word of the Introit, is one of the five principal Sundays of the Ecclesiastical Year, and is one on which the celebration of even the greatest festivals is prohibited.

INTROIT OF THE MASS.—Ps. 90.

"He shall call upon me, and I will hear him; I will deliver him and glorify him; I will fill him with length of days. He that dwelleth in the aid of the Most High shall abide under the protection of the God of Heaven." (Ps. 90.)  
Glory be to the Father.

These words of the royal Prophet, in which God gives assurance of His help and blessing to the just, contains an admonition for us to make ourselves worthy of God's protection and grace by penance and amendment, and by faithfully serving Him. At the same this consoling assurance of the Lord should give confidence to the true servant of God in his combats against evil temptations, from which no mortal is free.

PRAYER.

O God, who dost purify thy Church by the annual observance of Lent, grant to Thy servants, that what they endeavor to obtain of Thee by abstinence, they may pursue by good works. Through Christ.

EPISTLE.—2 Cor. 6: 1-10.

"Brethren: We do exhort you that you receive not the grace of God in vain. For he saith: 'In an accepted time have I heard thee: and in the day of salvation have I helped thee.' Behold now is the acceptable time: behold now is the day of salvation. Giving no offence to any man, that our ministry be not blamed: but in all things let us exhibit ourselves as the ministers of God, in much patience, in tribulation, in necessities, in distresses, in stripes, in prisons, in seditions, in labors, in watchings, in fastings, in chastity, in knowledge, in long-suffering, in sweetness, in the Holy Ghost, in charity unfeigned, in the word of truth, in the power of God: by the armor of justice on the right hand and on the left, by honor and dishonor, by evil report and good report: as deceivers, and yet true: as unknown, and yet known: as dying, and behold we live: as chastised, and not killed: as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing: as needy, yet enriching many: as having nothing, and possessing all things."

In these words the great Apostle admonishes the faithful of Corinth to use "the time of grace" for the salvation which God had bestowed upon them by their being received into the Church of Christ; and the Church, not without sig-

nification, admonishes us in the same words to use wisely the spiritual "time of grace," given to us in the holy season of Lent for penance and amendment of life, and for progressing in virtue and perfection, so that they may be for us truly days of grace and days of sanctification. According to the admonition of the Apostle, we should above all things be careful not to scandalize any one by sin or vice, but to show ourselves true servants of God, and faithful observers of His holy commands by patiently suffering all troubles and reverses of fortune imposed upon us by Him, by performing voluntary works of mortification and penance, by the constant practice of virtue, and by continued combat against the manifold temptations to which we are exposed.

Our conduct may be wrongly interpreted by the world, we may be looked upon as blinded, as miserable, or unjust, or even as seducers. These wicked accusations, however, should not disturb our peace of mind, since all things are known to God, and He will reward us in the world to come with eternal joy and happiness.

St. Chrysostom says: "Let us not be confounded by the opinion of the world, nor its views and decisions, although considering us to be seducers, mean and vile; for as the splendor of the sun is not perceptible to the blind, so the joys of the wise and prudent are unknown and inexplicable to those whose minds are darkened by sin; for the pious and the just are the only impartial judges of holy things. They do not rejoice at events at which others rejoice, they are not frightened at occurrences which cause others to shake with fear. As he who sees a man covered with wounds received in struggling for a crown, pities the man for the pain he must suffer, forgetting that the joy of winning the crown counterbalances the pain; so is it with those who only see our sufferings, not divining our reason for suffering; because they see only combats and dangers, but not the rewards, the crowns, and the cause of the combats."

GOSPEL.—Matt. 4 : 1-11.

"At that time: Jesus was led by the spirit into the desert, to be tempted by the devil. And when he had fasted forty days and forty nights, afterwards he was hungry. And the tempter coming, said to him: If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread. Who answered and said: It is written, 'Not in bread alone doth man live, but in every word that proceedeth from the mouth of God.' Then the devil took him up into the holy city, and set him upon the pinnacle of the temple, and said to him: 'If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down, for it is written: 'That he hath given his Angels charge over thee, and in their hands shall they bear thee up, lest perhaps thou dash thy foot against a stone.' Jesus said to him: It is written again: 'Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.' Again the devil took him up into a very high mountain: and shewed him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them, and said to him: All these will I give thee, if falling down, thou wilt

adore me. Then Jesus saith to him: Begone, Satan, for it is written, 'The Lord thy God shalt thou adore, and him only shalt thou serve.' Then the devil left him: and behold Angels came and ministered to him."

Immediately before the remarkable event related in to-day's Gospel, our Saviour had been baptized by John the Baptist in the river Jordan. The time of His public life had arrived, for which, as well as for the temptation in the desert, He wished to prepare Himself by an austere and mortified life, by prayer and meditation, and by a long and strict fast. An instructive lesson for us to prepare ourselves in the same manner for every important event in our lives; at the same time it is a proof that fasting is the proper means of attaining a virtuous and sanctified life, and of overcoming temptation.

We must not be surprised to see the devil tempting our Saviour, for the Lord permitted it; but at the same time we must not forget that all the efforts of the evil spirit, from the very creation of the world, have been directed against man, whom he envies for the destiny which he by disobedience has forfeited; thus trying to deprive him of it, and to bring misfortune and misery upon him. For this reason he seduced our first parents, and as he was successful in his first attempt, he felt sure that he could succeed in preventing the redemption of the world; he therefore tempted our Saviour Himself, whose divine attributes were probably unknown to him, seeing that our Lord appeared in such humility and poverty, and that, according to His human nature, He hungered, after His long and severe fast.

It perhaps appears strange that Jesus, the Son of God, the Purest and Holiest, permitted the most impure and unholy of spirits to approach Him with the intention of tempting Him to works of darkness. But as in all His doings upon earth, so in this case was He actuated by the wisest and kindest intention; for He suffered Himself to be tempted in order to further the salvation of His brethren.

According to the Holy Fathers, He allowed Himself to be tempted in order to teach His disciples not to be confounded by temptation, and not to lose courage by thinking that something extraordinary had befallen them; but to be firm, remembering that they had put on the armor of faith, not to rest, but to combat. He wished further to prove to us that no temptation is unconquerable.

"Wherefore it behoved him in all things to be made like unto his brethren, that he might become a merciful and faithful high-priest before God, that he might be a propitiation for the sins of the people; for in that, wherein he himself hath suffered and been tempted, he is able to succor them also that are tempted." (Hebr. 2: 17-18.)

"Finally," says St. Chrysostom, "He wished to convince us how great and precious is the treasure, confided to us in holy baptism, by the violence with



which the enemy assails us. The devil would certainly desist from his attacks, if his envy was not excited by seeing us children of God.

What the holy Pope Gregory the Great says in reference to this, is very remarkable: "In speaking of the God-man being tempted by the devil, our understanding refuses to believe it, and our ears will not listen to it; but we will not think it incredible, if we consider the many other wonderful things which were done to Him. For the devil is indeed the head of all the wicked who became his followers. Was Pilate not a follower of the devil? Were not the Jews who persecuted Christ, and the soldiers who crucified Him, followers of the devil? Why should we then be astonished to see Him led by the devil up into a mountain, when we see Him allow the followers of the devil to crucify Him? It is therefore not unworthy of our Redeemer, that He desired to be tempted, since He came only to suffer death for us. It was only right and proper that, as by His temptation ours should be conquered, so by His death ours was overcome."

The three different temptations correspond with the three most dangerous enemies of our salvation, by which we are constantly threatened, and in which all other temptations are contained: THE CONCUISCENCE OF THE FLESH, THE CONCUISCENCE OF THE EYE, AND THE PRIDE OF LIFE.

The first demand of the devil, that our Saviour should turn stones into bread, was a temptation of the appetite, by which he had already seduced our first parents. St. Chrysostom remarks, that this demand of the devil, that our Saviour should satisfy His hunger by working a miracle, did not in itself contain any thing wrong. Our Saviour could have exerted His divine power for Himself, as He did afterwards in behalf of the multitude who followed Him; but He did not wish to yield in the slightest degree to the demands of Satan, although there would have been nothing wrong had He changed stones into bread.

An important admonition for us, never to listen to the voice of the tempter, not even if he should invite us to do things in themselves innocent; for we should remember that the Evil One can endanger our eternal salvation by tempting us to do things apparently harmless in themselves; and that he sometimes transforms himself into an angel of light, in order to gain possession of our souls with greater certainty. (2 Cor. 11: 14.)

The answer of the Saviour in repelling this first temptation, that "not by bread alone man doth live, but by every word that proceedeth from the mouth of God,"—has reference to the spiritual food of the soul, consisting of the word of God, and the other means of salvation, and deserves to be attentively considered by us at this holy season, in which we should think more of nourishing the soul than of feeding the body.

The second temptation of the devil which he prepared for the Saviour, was that of PRIDE, seeing that his own fall had been caused by pride, and that he

had persuaded our first parents from the very same motive to eat of the forbidden fruit, and therefore to disobey God. "For," says St. Augustin, "he who indulges in the spirit of pride, will, in endeavoring to reach a great height, fall to the earth."

The Saviour wished also by the answer He gave to the tempter, "Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God," to teach us not to foolishly risk the safety of either our soul or body, and to instruct us to avoid vain-glory, because it is possible for us to fall from even the highest degree of perfection.

The third temptation of the devil was that of *AVARICE*, by which vice so many are deceived into the commission of the greatest sins. According to St. Luke, the devil in a moment of time exhibited to our Saviour all the kingdoms of the world. St. Ambrose says, in reference to this particular passage: "Not in vain is it said that the devil showed so much in a moment of time, for it indicates thereby not only the rapidity with which a moment passes away, but also how perishable are all the goods of this world; for they pass away in an instant, and even the greatness of the world disappears before it has been attained. What then is lasting in this world, if the world itself shall cease to exist? Let us learn from this to despise all perishable greatness, since all the glory of the world is under the influence of Satan, enduring but a short time, and yielding no profit."

According to the spirit of the Church, we should learn from the temptations of our Saviour, to resist firmly, as He did, all temptation, confidently trusting that, with the assistance of God, and by making use of the right means of salvation, we can successfully resist the strongest attacks of the devil, and that in such a noble combat, the angels of God will assist, encourage, protect, and serve us.

## FRIDAY AFTER THE FIRST SUNDAY IN LENT.

INTROIT OF THE MASS.—Ps. 24.

"Deliver me from my necessities, O Lord; see my abjection and my labor, and forgive me all my sins.—To thee, O Lord, have I lifted up my soul, in thee O my God, I put my trust, let me not be ashamed." Glory be to the Father.

These words of the royal Prophet, spoken by him in time of need, are for Christians, especially in this holy season, a confession of unworthiness and sin; united to which is an humble, but confident petition for divine mercy and assistance.

## PRAYER.

Be merciful, O Lord, to Thy people, and as Thou makest them devout to Thee, mercifully refresh them with kind assistance. Through our Lord.

## EPISTLE.—Ezekiel 18 : 20-28.

“Thus saith the Lord God: The soul that sinneth, the same shall die: the son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, and the father shall not bear the iniquity of the son: the justice of the just shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him. But if the wicked do penance for all his sins, which he hath committed, and keep all my commandments, and do judgment and justice, living he shall live, and shall not die. I will not remember all his iniquities that he hath done: in his justice which he had wrought, he shall live. Is it my will that a sinner should die, saith the Lord God, and not that he should be converted from his ways, and live? But if the just man turn himself away from his justice, and do iniquity according to all abominations which the wicked man useth to work, shall he live? all his justices which he hath done, shall not be remembered: in the prevarication, by which he had prevaricated, and in his sin, which he hath committed, in them he shall die. And you have said: The way of the Lord is not right. Hear ye, therefore, O house of Israel: Is it my way that is not right, and are not rather your ways perverse? For when the just turneth away from his justice, and committeth iniquity, he shall die therein: in the injustice that he hath wrought he shall die. And when the wicked turneth himself away from his wickedness, which he hath wrought, and doeth judgment, and justice: he shall save his soul alive. Because he considereth and turneth away himself from all his iniquities which he hath wrought, he shall surely live, and not die, saith the Lord Almighty.”

These words, clearly and definitely expressing the infinite love and mercy of God towards repenting sinners, but at the same time his severe judgment upon the malicious transgressor of his commands, are proposed by the Catholic Church to her children as worthy of serious attention, so that all who have sinned may do penance and become again children of God, and to encourage the just to persevere in the way of virtue, in order not to lose by sin the fruits of their former virtues, thus bringing upon themselves the disgrace and punishment of God.

## GOSPEL.—John 5 : 1-15.

“At that time there was a festival day of the Jews, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. Now there is at Jerusalem a pond, called Probatika, which in Hebrew is named Bethsaida, having five porches. In these lay a great multitude of sick, of blind, of lame, of withered, waiting for the moving of the water. And an angel of the Lord descended at certain times into the pond, and the water was moved. And he that went down first into the pond after the motion



of the water was made whole of whatsoever infirmity he lay under. And there was a certain man there, that had been eight-and-thirty years under his infirmity. Him when Jesus had seen lying, and knew that he had been now a long time, he saith to him: Wilt thou be made whole? The infirm man answered him: Sir, I have no man, when the water is troubled, to put me into the pond. For whilst I am coming, another goeth down before me. Jesus saith to him: Arise, take up thy bed, and walk. And immediately the man was made whole: and he took up his bed and walked. And it was the Sabbath that day. The Jews therefore said to him that had been healed: It is the Sabbath, it is not lawful for thee to take up thy bed. He answered them: He that made me whole, he saith to me: Take up thy bed, and walk. They asked him therefore: Who is that man that saith to thee: Take up thy bed, and walk? But he who was healed, knew not who it was. For Jesus went aside from the multitude standing in the place. Afterwards Jesus findeth him in the temple, and saith to him: Behold thou art made whole: sin no more, lest some worse thing happen to thee. The man went his way, and told the Jews that it was Jesus who had made him whole."

The pond Bethsaida, which effected such miraculous cures, was, according to St. Augustin, laid out by King Solomon, as a place in which sheep and other beasts destined for sacrifice, were to be washed; hence doubtless the name of "sheep-pond." In the pond was a well of salt-water, which still exists, and which becomes boiling hot in the morning, but cools off gradually during the day. From the words of the Gospel, and the interpretation of the Holy Fathers, it seems to follow that the wonderful effects which resulted from bathing in the Probatica of Jerusalem, were owing to the immediate influence of God's omnipotence, and can not therefore be surprising to us, since in those times the mercy of God was shown in a special manner, and the Son of God performed many miracles for the spiritual as well as for the temporal benefit of mankind.

The remarkable well of Jerusalem was, according to the ingenious interpretation of the Holy Fathers, a type of HOLY BAPTISM, instituted by Christ, which sacrament, by means of His love and mercy, effects a most wonderful and salutary cure in all diseases of the soul.

The sick man, who was so quickly and miraculously healed by our Saviour, and who, according to the words of Christ, had through his own fault contracted a long and loathsome disease, is a fit type, not only of sinful man in general, but of every sinner in particular. Depressed by the sad consequences of sin, miserable and helpless in regard to his soul, the sinner is unable either to free himself from his wretched condition, or to apply to his soul the means of salvation, if the Lord, in His love and mercy, did not assist him, and extend to him the aid of His strong arm. This fact furnishes us with abundant material for earnest meditation at this holy season. It warns us against sin, and admonishes us,

if we have lost by sin the grace of baptism, to lose no time in applying to our soul the waters of the other fountain of salvation, instituted by our divine Redeemer—THE HOLY SACRAMENT OF PENANCE—in order to be cured of our spiritual diseases, and thus recover the health of our soul.

On this day the Church celebrates also

“THE FEAST OF THE CROWN OF THORNS.”

INTROIT OF THE MASS.—Cant. 3.

“Go forth, ye daughters of Zion, and see King Solomon in the diadem, wherewith his mother crowned him, preparing a cross for the Saviour. Thou hast crowned him, O Lord, with glory and honor, and hast set him over the works of thy hands.”

PRAYER.

Grant, we beseech Thee, Almighty Lord, that we, who in memory of the passion of our Lord Jesus Christ, venerate his crown of thorns upon earth, may deserve to be crowned by Him with glory and honor in heaven. Through our Lord.

EPISTLE.—Cant. 3: 7-11; 4: 1-8.

“Behold three score valiant ones of the most valiant of Israel, surround the bed of Solomon, all holding swords, and most expert in war; every man’s sword upon his thigh, because of fears in the night. King Solomon hath made him a litter of the wood of Libanus; the pillars thereof he made of silver, the seat of gold, the going up of purple; the midst he covered with charity for the daughters of Jerusalem. Go forth, ye daughters of Zion, and see King Solomon in the diadem wherewith his mother crowned him in the day of his espousals, and in the day of the joy of his heart. How beautiful art thou, my love, how beautiful art thou; thy eyes are doves’ eyes, besides what is hid within. Come from Libanus, my spouse; come from Libanus, come; thou shalt be crowned.”

GOSPEL.—John 19: 1-5.

“At that time, Pilate took Jesus, and scourged him. And the soldiers, plating a crown of thorns, put it upon his head • and they put on him a purple garment. And they came to him and said: Hail, King of the Jews: and they gave him blows. Pilate therefore went forth again, and saith to them: Behold, I bring him forth unto you, that you may know that I find no cause in him. Jesus therefore came forth bearing the crown of thorns, and the purple garment.

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## SECOND SUNDAY IN LENT.

CALLED ALSO

## SUNDAY REMINISCERE.

INTROIT OF THE MASS.—Ps. 22.

“REMEMBER, O God, thy bowels of compassion, and thy mercies that are from the beginning of the world, lest at any time our enemies rule over us; deliver us, O God, from all our tribulations. To thee, O Lord, have I lifted up my soul. In thee, O God, I put my trust, let me not be ashamed.”  
Glory be to the Father.

These words of the royal Prophet contain a prayer full of confidence to God, asking for assistance against his enemies; the faithful should repeat them with the desire of obtaining God's grace against the enemies of their salvation, and against temptation.

PRAYER.

O God, who beholdest us destitute of every virtue, preserve us both inwardly and outwardly, that we may be defended from all adversities in body, and purified from all evil thoughts in mind, through our Lord. Amen.

EPISTLE.—1 Thess. 4 : 1-7.

“Brethren: We pray and beseech you in the Lord Jesus, that as you have received of us, how you ought to walk, and to please God, so also you would walk, that you may abound the more. For you know what precepts I have given to you by the Lord Jesus. For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you should abstain from fornication. That every one of you should know how to possess his vessel in sanctification and honor: not in the passion of lust, like the Gentiles that know not God: and that no man overreach nor circumvent his brother in business; because the Lord is the avenger of all these things, as we have told you before, and have testified. For God hath not called us unto uncleanness, but unto sanctification in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

In these words of the Apostle is contained an exhortation to a pure, honest, holy, and just life, according to the will of God, warning us at the same time to guard against the sin of impurity, and of dishonesty in our dealings with others; reminding the faithful that they are members of the holy body of Jesus Christ, and according to the will of God called to sanctification. In many places of the holy Scripture the faithful are called “Saints,” that is, sanctified, because having been sanctified in holy baptism by the grace of God, they should faith-



fully preserve their sanctity during life, and should endeavor to grow more and more in holiness.

St. Augustin says: "If therefore Christians, who have put on Jesus Christ, are not holy, they insult the divine head, whose members should be holy."

In reference to the words: "This is the will of God, your sanctification,"—St. Cyprian makes the following beautiful application: "The will of God consists in what Christ has taught and done: humility in conversation, firmness in faith, propriety in words, justice in dealing, mercy in all things, and decency in morals; to suffer injury, to live in peace with our brethren, to love God above all things, to love Him as our Father, to fear Him as our God, to prefer Christ above all things, as He preferred us; to adhere inseparably to His love; to remain faithfully at His Cross, and if the honor of His name is attacked, to show firmness in confessing it. We must have confidence in trials, and patience in our sickness;—this means to be a co-heir of Christ, this means to do the will of the Father."

GOSPEL.—Matt. 17: 1–9.

"At that time: Jesus taketh unto him Peter and James, and John his brother, and bringeth them up into a high mountain apart. And he was transfigured before them. And his face did shine as the sun: and his garments became white as snow. And behold there appeared to them Moses and Elias talking with him. And Peter answering, said to Jesus: Lord, it is good for us to be here: if thou wilt, let us make here three tabernacles, one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias. And as he was yet speaking, behold a bright cloud overshadowed them. And lo a voice out of the cloud, saying: This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased: hear ye him. And the disciples hearing, fell upon their face, and were very much afraid. And Jesus came and touched them; and said to them: Arise, and fear not. And they, lifting up their eyes, saw no one but only Jesus. And as they came down from the mountain, Jesus charged them, saying: Tell the vision to no man till the son of man be risen from the dead."

A few days before this wonderful event, Jesus had predicted to His disciples His approaching sufferings and death on the cross; but at the same time He reminded them, that he who desired to become like Him, must deny himself, and take up his cross and follow Him. The Saviour knew that His words would have a depressing effect upon His disciples, and He therefore determined to allow at least some of the most prominent among them, and those with whom He was most intimate, to have a foretaste of His divine glory, in order to remove any doubts which might have assailed them, when hearing of His sufferings and of their own approaching trials.

The three disciples who were to be witnesses of His transfiguration were:

PETER, the first visible head of the Church; JAMES, (the greater,) prominent among the Apostles as the first who suffered martyrdom, and his brother JOHN, the beloved of the Lord, the one who outlived all of the Apostles. These three were chosen also to be witnesses of the sufferings of their Master in the garden; and as it was to them, so should it be to every Christian (especially during the holy season of Lent), an earnest assurance of the great truth, that the hours of transfiguration—of consolation and joy—to the servant of God upon earth are few, and soon pass away, and that they must first walk the long and difficult way of the cross, to become partakers in His eternal and glorious transfiguration in heaven.

At the transfiguration of the Lord two of the greatest Saints of the old law appeared: MOSES, known as the lawgiver, and ELIAS, the greatest prophet of the old law; both prototypes of the Redeemer. They thereby gave testimony of Christ, that it was He who was announced, promised, and pointed out by the law and the prophets as the Redeemer of the world; that therefore the law and the prophets, and the whole of the old Testament had received its fulfillment and perfection in Him. The holy Pope Leo says: "The Lord revealed His glory before authentic witnesses, and the body which He had taken to Himself, and which was like unto that of ours, was transfigured with such splendor that His face shone as did the sun, and His garments became white as the driven snow. He intended by His transfiguration to remove from the hearts of the disciples the scandal of the cross, so that the humiliation of His voluntary sufferings might not confound the faith of those to whom the greatness of His concealed dignity had been revealed. The hope of His holy Church should thereby be strengthened; it should be known to the whole body of Christ what changes had taken place in it; every member of this body should expect a participation in the same transfiguration, which shone before them in the person of Christ. But there is still another lesson contained in the transfiguration of the Lord, besides that of confirming the Apostles in their faith—that of bestowing upon them greater knowledge. Moses and Elias, the representatives, one of the law, and the other of the prophets, appeared to the Lord, and spoke to Him; so that by the presence of these five was truly fulfilled what is written: 'In the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may stand.' What can be clearer, what more true, than these words, in the promulgation of which the trumpets of the old and new law sound in harmony, and where the voice of the prototypes of the old law coincide with the doctrine of the Gospel? For the declarations of both testaments confirm each other, and He whom the prototypes have promised under the veil of mysteries, is revealed by the splendor of the present glory."

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## FRIDAY AFTER THE SECOND SUNDAY IN LENT.

INTROIT OF THE MASS.—Ps. 16.

"BUT I will appear before thy sight in justice ; I shall be satisfied when thy glory shall be made manifest. Hear, O Lord, my justice, attend to my supplication." Glory be to the Father.

These words, in which the royal prophet calls for divine assistance against his persecutors, the Church applies figuratively to the innocent suffering Saviour, who is also persecuted by the wicked.

PRAYER.

Grant, we beseech Thee, Almighty God, that, purified by the holy fast, we may arrive by Thy grace with sincere minds at the festival to come. Through our Lord.

EPISTLE.—Gen. 37 : 6-22.

"In those days, Joseph said to his brethren: Hear my dream which I dreamed. I thought we were binding sheaves in the field: and my sheaf arose as it were and stood, and your sheaves standing about, bowed down before my sheaf. His brethren answered: Shalt thou be our king? or shall we be subject to thy dominion? Therefore this matter of his dreams and words ministered nourishment to their envy and hatred. He dreamed also another dream, which he told his brethren, saying: I saw in a dream, as it were the sun, and the moon, and eleven stars worshiping me. And when he had told this to his father and brethren, his father rebuked him, and said: What meaneth this dream that thou hast dreameth? shall I and thy mother, and thy brethren worship thee upon the earth? His brethren therefore envied him: but his father considered the thing with himself. And when his brethren abode in Sichem, feeding their father's flocks, Israel said to him: Thy brethren feed the sheep in Sichem: come, I will send thee to them. And when he answered: I am ready: he said to him: Go, and see if all things be well with thy brethren, and the cattle: and bring me word again what is doing. So being sent from the vale of Hebron, he came to Sichem: and a man found him there wandering in the field, and asked what he sought. But he answered: I seek my brethren, tell me where they feed the flocks. And the man said to him: They are departed from this place: for I heard them say: Let us go to Dothain. And Joseph went forward after his brethren, and found them in Dothain. And when they saw him afar off, before he came nigh them, they thought to kill him. And said one to another: Behold the dreamer cometh. Come, let us kill him, and cast him into some old pit, and we will say: Some evil beast hath devoured him: and then it shall appear what his dreams avail him: and Ruben hearing this,



endeavored to deliver him out of their hands, and said: Do not take away his life, nor shed his blood: but cast him into this pit, that is in the wilderness, and keep your hands harmless: now he said this, being desirous to deliver him out of their hands, and restore him to his father."

The Church proposes to us the history of Joseph, persecuted by his brethren, because he was a beautiful type of Christ, who, innocent, was persecuted by His own people. As Joseph, persecuted and sold into bondage by his brethren, became, according to God's wise provisions, the protector not only of his own family, but also of whole nations, by averting through his wise counsels a famine from Egypt and the neighboring countries; so the Saviour, persecuted by His own people, and delivered up to the Gentiles, in order that He might be put to death, has become, according to the inscrutable decrees of a divine providence, the Saviour of mankind, by saving us through His death from eternal perdition.

GOSPEL.—Matt. 21: 33-46.

"At that time Jesus spoke this parable to the multitude of the Jews, and the chief-priests: There was a man a householder who planted a vineyard, and made a hedge round about it, and dug in it a wine-press, and built a tower, and let it out to husbandmen: and went into a strange country. And when the time of the fruits drew nigh, he sent his servants to the husbandmen, that they might receive the fruits thereof. And the husbandmen laying hands on his servants, beat one, and killed another, and stoned another. Again he sent other servants more than the former: and they did to them in like manner. And last of all he sent to them his son, saying: They will reverence my son. But the husbandmen seeing the son, said among themselves: This is the heir, come, let us kill him, and we shall have his inheritance. And taking him they cast him forth out of the vineyard, and killed him. When, therefore, the lord of the vineyard shall come, what will he do to those husbandmen? They say to him: He will bring those evil men to an evil end: and will let out his vineyard to other husbandmen, that shall render him the fruit in due season. Jesus saith to them: Have you never read in the Scriptures: 'The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner? By the Lord this hath been done, and it is wonderful in our eyes.' Therefore I say to you, that the kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and shall be given to a nation yielding the fruits thereof. And whosoever shall fall on this stone shall be broken: but on whomsoever it shall fall, it shall grind him to powder. And when the chief-priests and Pharisees had heard his parables, they knew that he spoke of them. And seeking to lay hands on him, they feared the multitudes: because they held him as a prophet."

The parable of to-day refers first to the Jews, and describes in a few but appropriate words their ingratitude, malice, and hardness of heart. God had called them first into His vineyard; that is, into His kingdom upon earth, and had given to them all the means of salvation; the prophets, the servants of God, who were repeatedly sent by the Lord to the Jews, to incite them to bring forth the fruits of virtue and good works, were not well received by this wicked people, but were persecuted, beaten, and killed. At last the Lord sent to them His only begotten Son, Jesus Christ, to teach the wicked the error of their ways, but He was received no better than His servants had been, and He too was put to death. By acting as they did, the Jews drew down upon themselves the punishment which they deserved, and with which the Lord had threatened them. They were rejected by the Almighty, and the kingdom of God was taken away from them and given to the Gentiles, who received it with more willingness, and who brought forth better fruits.

For us, however, who possess the means of salvation, an important truth is contained in the above Gospel, and it is one which we should take into special consideration at this holy season. We should resolve to make better use of the means of salvation bestowed upon us, than did the Jews, to offer to the Lord the fruits of our good works, and to pray that we may be delivered from that unhappy blindness which caused the wretched Jews to despise their Redeemer, to reject His doctrine, and to trample upon His commandments; remembering the significant words of the Lord: "Whosoever shall fall on this stone, shall be broken; but on whomsoever it shall fall, it shall grind him to powder." "For," remarks St. Augustine, "those fall upon Christ who despise and offend Him; but Christ falls upon those whom in His judgment He rejects, and who are scattered like dust before the wind."

On this day the Catholic Church also celebrates

#### THE FEAST OF THE SPEAR AND NAILS OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST.

It is quite probable that the instruments used at the Passion of our Saviour were afterwards collected as valuable relics, and venerated as so many trophies of the glorified Saviour. The Church, therefore, has instituted different festivals in honor of the different instruments sanctified by the sufferings and death of the God-man,—two feasts in honor of the holy cross, as the instrument of Redemption itself (the feast of the finding and of the exaltation of the holy cross), and the feast of the Spear and the Nails of our Lord Jesus Christ, which we celebrate to-day.

It is not necessary to remark, that the veneration which the Church shows

to these, as well as to other holy relics, does not refer to the things in themselves, but rather to the PERSON through whom they obtained their signification and value—to our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

The NAILS with which our Saviour was fastened to the cross, were discovered by St. Helena at the time of her finding the holy cross, both of which relics she presented to her son, the Emperor Constantine the Great. One of these nails the emperor attached to the reins of his horse, as a protection against the dangers of battle, to which he was exposed in the wars waged by him against powerful enemies. Another he placed in his diadem, which he wore over his helmet, and the third he presented to a church. One of these nails was afterwards placed in the crown of Lombardy, from which fact it received its name of "The Iron Crown," and it was with this crown that the Roman emperors or kings of Lombardy were crowned.

The SPEAR with which the side of our Saviour was pierced after His death, is said to have been found with the nails, at the same time and place. It was found afterwards during the first Crusade, (in the year one thousand and ninety-eight), by Godfrey of Bouillon, in a church of Antioch in Syria, where the Christians, from fear of the Saracens, had concealed it. The Crusaders, who had gained possession of the city, in which however they were besieged and hardly pressed by a powerful enemy, had begun to despair of being saved, when the sacred relic was found, which so animated and filled them with courage, that they attacked the enemy and gained a most glorious victory over him. The holy Spear was then taken to Jerusalem, as that city had fallen into the hands of the Crusaders, and was afterwards removed to Constantinople.

St. Louis IX, king of France, who went also upon a crusade to the Holy Land, brought the point of the spear, together with the sponge, to Paris; the other part remained in Constantinople; but when that city was conquered by the Turks, under their Sultan Mohammed II, in the year one thousand four hundred and fifty-three, his son and successor Bajazeth sent the holy relic to Pope Innocent VIII, as a present, in the year one thousand four hundred and sixty-two, who transferred it to the Vatican.

INTROIT OF THE MASS.—Ps. 21.

"They have dug my hands and my feet, they have numbered all my bones, and I am poured out like water. My heart is become like wax melting in the midst of my bowels." Glory be to the Father.

These words, in which the suffering Saviour, through the royal prophet, expresses his sorrow and grief, are proposed to us for serious meditation.



## PRAYER.

O God, who in the infirmity of the flesh, which Thou didst assume, wert pleased to be fastened with nails, and wounded with a spear, for the salvation of the world, mercifully grant that we, who venerate the solemnity of the same nails and spear upon earth, may rejoice in the glorious triumph of Thy victory in heaven. Through Christ.

EPISTLE.—Zach. 12 : 10. 13 : 6-7.

(See Friday after Ash-Wednesday, page 309.)

In this prophecy of Zachary our Saviour Himself foretells how the inhabitants of Jerusalem, when the spirit of God should come upon them, and when enlightened with His grace, would acknowledge as their Lord and Saviour Him whom they had crucified, and whose side they had pierced after death. He prophesied that they would be filled with bitter lamentations on account of the outrageous treatment which He had received. After the conversion of the people, the fountain of baptism should be poured upon them, by which every sin should be washed away. The closing words of the prophecy mention how Jesus, the God-man, was wounded by His beloved people; how, through God's will, the sword of His enemies was raised against Him, the good Shepherd, so that out of fear the small number of His disciples became scattered.

The prophecy to which St. John alludes in the Gospel of to-day, as fulfilled through the opening of the side of our Saviour by the spear of a soldier, is brought before us very appropriately on the feast of the Instruments of the Passion of our Lord.

GOSPEL.—John 19 : 23-35.

“At that time, Jesus knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the Scripture might be fulfilled, said: I thirst. Now there was a vessel set there full of vinegar. And they putting a sponge full of vinegar about hyssop, put it to his mouth. Jesus, therefore, when he had taken the vinegar, said: It is consummated. And bowing his head he gave up the ghost. Then the Jews (because it was the parascève), that the bodies might not remain upon the cross on the Sabbath-day (for that was a great Sabbath-day), besought Pilate that their legs might be broken, and that they might be taken away. The soldiers, therefore, came, and they broke the legs of the first, and of the other that was crucified with him. But after they were come to Jesus, when they saw that he was already dead, they did not break his legs. But one of the soldiers with a spear opened his side, and immediately there came out blood and water. And he that saw it hath given testimony, and his testimony is true.”

As the other sufferings of our Lord had been predicted in the old law, so also had been His burning thirst on the cross. He Himself refers to it in the

words of the royal prophet: "I am poured out like water, and all my bones are scattered; my heart is become like wax melting in the midst of my bowels. My strength is dried up like a potsherd, and my tongue hath cleaved to my jaws." (Ps. 21: 15, 16.) And again: "And they gave me gall for my food, and in my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink." (Ps. 68: 22.) To fulfill the scriptures, Christ allowed vinegar to be offered to Him to allay His thirst.

The *HYSSOP*, which the soldiers applied to the sponge filled with vinegar, in order to give it to the Saviour to drink, was a very bitter herb, which was prescribed in the old law for the use of sprinkling with the blood of animals to be sacrificed, and with the water of expiation. The Israelites, before their exodus from Egypt, were obliged to dip a bunch of hyssop in the blood of the paschal lamb, and sprinkle the transom of the doors of their houses, in order to be freed at the killing of the first-born from the sword of the destroyer. (Exodus 12: 22.) When Moses made the covenant on Mount Sinai between God and the Israelites, he sprinkled the altar and the people with hyssop, dipped in the blood of sacrificed calves. (Lev. 24: 6, 8.) Hyssop also was used at the preparation and sprinkling of the water of expiation, (Num. 19.) and for the cleansing of leprosy. (Lev. 14: 3, 4.) In the same meaning David says: "Thou shalt sprinkle me with hyssop, and I shall be cleansed; thou shalt wash me, and I shall be made whiter than snow." (Ps. 50: 9.)

Very appropriately, therefore, does the Catholic Church sing the above passage (Ps. 50: 9.) on all the Sundays after Pentecost until Easter, at the sprinkling of the holy water before High Mass, to remind us of the purification of our sins, effected by the blood of Christ, offered up in the most holy sacrifice of the Mass.

As the taking of vinegar by the Saviour was foretold, so also were the two other circumstances mentioned in the Gospel of to-day: that His legs should not be broken, as was usually done to those who were crucified, and that His side should be opened. Of the first we have already spoken in the Epistle of to-day; the other circumstance, however, that the bones of our Saviour's body should not be broken, was expressed in the preparation of the Jewish paschal lamb, which is to be considered as the type of our Saviour; and the precept, therefore, not to break the legs of the lamb, refers in a more exalted sense to Jesus, the true paschal lamb.

According to the opinion of most of the ancient writers, the spear pierced the RIGHT side of our Saviour, penetrating His heart; so that, as a sure sign of His death, blood and water issued forth. From this fact is refuted the objection of those heretics who maintained that our Lord had not really died on the cross, but had been laid in the sepulchre apparently dead. St. John, therefore, whose object it was to prove the divinity of Christ, is very accurate in relating this circumstance, to confirm thereby the great miracle of the resurrection of the Lord.

An extract, taken from a decree of Pope Innocent IV., who instituted this feast in the year one thousand three hundred and fifty-four, is worthy of our attentive consideration. He says: "In the most holy sufferings of our Lord we must remember, while meditating upon the mysteries and merits of His sufferings, in particular to venerate also the different instruments of the passion. It deserves to be specially mentioned, that our Redeemer Himself, after having given up His spirit, while hanging on the cross, permitted His side to be pierced with a spear, that from the blood and water issuing forth, might be formed the only immaculate and virgin Mother, the Catholic Church, His beloved spouse. O blessed opening of His side, from which so many and so great benefits of divine love have flowed out upon us! O blessed spear, which produced so many and so great benefits, and which deserved to be elevated to the glory of so great a triumph! It opened to us, through the side of our Lord, the sacred gate of the heavenly kingdom. It wounded Him, who was already dead, to give us life and salvation. It has, by piercing the Innocent, taken away the guilt of the sinner, and by sprinkling us with His most sacred blood, He has opened the eyes of our spiritual blindness, and purified us by the storm of His divine love. The blessed nails, with which our Saviour was fastened to the cross, also deserve our veneration, for they were not only sprinkled with His innocent blood, and deemed worthy to fasten His sacred body upon the cross, but by the wounds which they inflicted, have we not obtained so great a sweetness of divine love that our hands have been freed from the fetters of sin, and our feet from the snares of death? For what is more sacred to us than those wounds? What is more beneficial to us than those wounds, from which our salvation proceeded, and by which the soul of the pious Christian can always be healed?"

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### THIRD SUNDAY IN LENT.

CALLED ALSO

#### SUNDAY "OCULI."

INTROIT OF THE MASS.—Ps. 24: 12, 15, 16.

"My eyes are ever towards the Lord; for he shall pluck my feet out of the snare. Look thou upon me and have mercy upon me, for I am alone and poor. To thee, O Lord, have I lifted up my soul; in thee, O God, I put my trust, let me not be ashamed." Glory be to the Father.

These words of the Psalmist contain a fervent prayer for God's assistance



and mercy, which could be very fitly said during this holy season of grace, by all who are encompassed by the snares of sin.

## PRAYER.

We beseech Thee, Almighty God, regard the prayers of Thy humble servants, and stretch forth in our defence the right hand of Thy majesty. Through Christ.

## EPISTLE.—Ephesians, 5 : 1-9.

“Brethren: Be ye therefore followers of God, as most dear children. And walk in love as Christ also hath loved us, and hath delivered himself for us, an oblation and a sacrifice to God for an odor of sweetness. But fornication and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not so much as be named among you, as becometh saints, or obscenity, or foolish talking, or scurrility, which is to no purpose: but rather giving of thanks. For know ye this and understand that no fornicator, nor unclean, nor covetous person (which is a serving of idols), hath inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God. Let no man deceive you with vain words. For because of these things cometh the anger of God upon the children of unbelief. Be ye not therefore partakers with them. For you were heretofore darkness, but now light in the Lord. Walk ye as children of the light: for the fruit of the light is in all goodness, and justice, and truth.”

In this epistle, the Apostle admonishes the faithful to be mindful of the great love which Christ has shown by having freed them from the darkness of infidelity and sin, and by having enlightened them with the light of true faith; he exhorts them to live in a manner worthy of this grace, as children of light, by following the example of God Himself, and by avoiding every temptation, in order not to fall back again into their former darkness. The Apostle warns them particularly against two dangerous vices: IMPURITY (by which is also understood indecent conversation,) and AVARICE, because these two vices deceive the hearts of men, making slaves of them, and destroying in them the love of God, of charity, and of all noble and honorable feelings. The avaricious man is called by the Apostle an idolator, in the same sense in which the Saviour Himself explains it, saying, that we can not serve God and mammon, that is, the idol of wealth, since avarice is the immoderate desire after earthly goods, and governs man more than any other passion, making him, as it were, a slave of money.

The same admonition of the Apostle deserves (especially in this holy season of penance,) the most earnest consideration of all the faithful; the more so, as the two vices of which he speaks are still too widely spread among Christians. Many, who are governed by their prejudices, consider avarice and impurity—such as indulging in obscene words and songs—as not at all sinful, and therefore commit these sins with the greatest indifference. Let us hear what St.

Chrysostom says in regard to improper words: "Nothing is more vulgar, nothing more contemptible, than a man who uses obscene words. Those who expose their want of modesty, belong to the worst class of men..... You are not admitted to an ordinary table, if you possess a bad breath, and yet you hesitate not to receive the sacred mysteries when your soul is polluted with sin! Should any one place before you on the table an unclean dish, you would order him away; and yet you believe that God is not offended when you utter immodest words at His table. (His table is our mouth which should be filled with thanksgiving.) Such language is more detestable than unclean vessels. Nothing provokes Him more than such words; nothing makes man so insolent and so presuming than to hear or speak such words; nothing breaks down quicker the barriers of decency, than the flames kindled by such loose words or speeches."

GOSPEL.—Luke 11: 14-18.

"At that time: Jesus was casting out a devil, and the same was dumb; and when he had cast out the devil, the dumb spoke: and the multitudes were in admiration at it: but some of them said: He casteth out devils, by Beelzebub, the prince of devils. And others tempting, asked from him a sign from heaven. But he seeing their thoughts, said to them: Every kingdom divided against itself shall be brought to desolation, and house upon house shall fall. And if satan also be divided against himself, how shall his kingdom stand? because you say, that through Beelzebub I cast out devils. Now if I cast out devils by Beelzebub, by whom do your children cast them out? Therefore they shall be your judges. But if I by the finger of God cast out devils, doubtless the kingdom of God is come upon you. When a strong man armed keepeth his court: those things are in peace which he possesseth. But if a stronger man than he come upon him and overcome him: he will take away all his armor wherein he trusted, and will distribute his spoils. He that is not with me is against me: and he that gathereth not with me, scattereth. When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man, he walketh through places without water, seeking rest: and not finding, he saith: I will return into my house whence I came out. And when he is come, he findeth it swept and garnished. Then he goeth and taketh with him seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and entering in they dwell there. And the last state of that man becometh worse than the first. And it came to pass: as he spoke these things, a certain woman from the crowd lifting up her voice said to him: Blessed is the womb that bore thee, and the paps that gave thee suck. But he said: Yea rather, blessed are they who hear the word of God and keep it."

The Gospel of to-day relates how one, possessed by an evil spirit, was brought before the Saviour and cured. The sacred writings of the old and of the new law mention a great many instances where the fallen angels—called also devils

or evil spirits—through malice and envy tried to injure man in soul and body. It is intimated in the holy scriptures that the fallen angels, although driven out of heaven on account of their disobedience, were not all cast into hell, but into some other place, where they were obliged to remain as banished spirits until the last judgment, and their eternal damnation; and while in this place they execute their wicked designs against man, to do which they possess a certain degree of power. As a proof of this we will cite the words of the devils, whom Christ was about to cast out from some who were possessed by them: "Art thou come hither to torment us before our time?" And again by the words of the Saviour Himself, saying: "Depart from me, you cursed, into everlasting fire, PREPARED for the devil and his angels;"—from which we can justly conclude that all of them are not there yet. In regard to the place where these evil spirits dwell, the holy Fathers are of the opinion that, after having been cast out of heaven, they were removed to the air; and, according to St. Augustine, to the thicker atmosphere lying next the earth, which in comparison to the higher and purer atmosphere, and to the clearness of the firmament itself, is justly called DARKNESS, as the devil is also called "The Prince of Darkness." This opinion is also confirmed by the holy scripture. St. Paul, calling the devil expressly the prince of the power of the air (Ephes. 2: 2), thus addresses the Christians, exhorting them to persevere in the combat against him (the devil): "For our wrestling is not against flesh and blood, but against principalities and powers; against the rulers of the world of this darkness, against the spirit of wickedness in the high places." (Eph. 6: 1-2.)

Should the evil spirits not yet be in hell, we must justly admit that they are at least in a place of torment. St. Gregory says: "A fire burns them now, but another shall burn them on the day of judgment." To be cast out of heaven, and the knowledge of being damned for ever, must surely fill with infinite pain those who were at one time proud and happy spirits.

According to the holy scripture, there are many ways by which evil spirits endeavor to harm men. Our first parents were tempted to sin by Satan; it was the will of God that an evil spirit should deprive Job of his whole property and of all his children, and then afflict him with a terrible disease. King Saul was tormented by an evil spirit, and became very sad. In the time of the Saviour and the Apostles, many unhappy men were possessed by evil spirits, who spoke and acted in them, tormenting them often with bodily sufferings, such as dumbness, blindness, deafness, madness, epilepsy, and other terrible afflictions. God permitted these evil spirits to visit men, partly, as in the case of Job, to try the just, and to confirm their patience and perseverance; partly to punish for their sins those who had left the Lord, like Saul, and, partly, to give our Saviour an opportunity to show His divine power over bad spirits, by casting out devils, giving evident proof that through Him the power of the devil should be destroyed, thereby indicating to all men the divine mission of



the Son of God, since even the devils, when cast out by Christ, proclaimed Him loudly before the people to be the son of David, the promised Messiah.

In regard to this last point, our Saviour draws the attention of His enemies to the fact that by casting out devils, by Him, the kingdom of God upon earth had been restored; and shows at the same time the contradiction of their assertion that He was casting out devils by the power of devils, so that one devil was opposed to another. The saying of Christ, that the children of Israel cast out devils, or at least professed to do so, is founded upon many facts recorded by ancient historians, among them Flavius Josephus, who asserts that there were Jewish exorcists in the time of Christ and the Apostles who, by invoking the divine name or the assistance of deceased persons who during life had been in close communion with God, attempted to cast out devils, which they did in certain cases, but their efforts did not always result successfully. (Mark 9: 37. Luke 9: 49. Acts 19: 13-16.)

Our Saviour, however, after having cast out the devils, impressed several important truths upon those that were with Him, and through them upon us. He first tells us that we through sin had formerly been under the control of the strong man, that is, the devil, but that now we have been freed by a stronger one from the servitude of Satan; and that, redeemed by Christ, we should live and work with and for Him and for His honor, because otherwise we would belong to His enemies, and have therefore no part in the fruits of redemption. He then proposes to us the great and solemn truth, that, although delivered from the power of the devil, either by baptism or penance, we should walk cautiously, as we are always in danger of falling back into the bondage of Satan, because the evil spirit does not like to lose possession of his prey, but wishes rather to return into his former dwelling.

But, continues the Saviour, if man by a relapse into sin falls back into the service of Satan, his last state will become worse than his first, since the one unclean spirit will take with him many other evil spirits to dwell with him in the unfortunate man. Experience teaches us that the more frequently man relapses into his former sins, the more wicked he becomes, and the more will he be filled with sin of every kind, being more and more under the dominion of sin. It is indeed a truth worthy of serious consideration, and one upon which we can not sufficiently meditate, especially at this holy season, in order to try, by sincere amendment, and by bringing forth fruits worthy of penance, to free ourselves entirely from the sad bondage of the devil, and care fully guard ourselves from every relapse into our former sins.

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## FRIDAY AFTER THE THIRD SUNDAY IN LENT.

INTROIT OF THE MASS.—Ps. 85.

“SHOW me, O God, a token for good, that they who hate me may see and be confounded; because thou, O Lord, hast helped me, hast comforted me. Bow down thy ear, O Lord, and hear me, for I am needy and poor.” Glory be to the Father.

These words contain a prayer of the royal prophet for God's assistance against his enemies. The Church repeats the same through this holy season, that the faithful may call upon the Lord to help them in their struggle with the enemies of their salvation, that by sorrow and penance they may be able to overcome them.

PRAYER.

Look down on our fasts, we beseech Thee, O Lord, with merciful favor, that, as we abstain from food in body, so we may fast from vice in mind. Through our Lord.

EPISTLE.—Numbers 20: 2-13.

“In those days, the children of Israel came together against Moses and Aaron: and making a sedition, they said: Would God we had perished among our brethren before the Lord. Why have you brought out the church of the Lord into the wilderness, that both we and our cattle should die? Why have you made us come up out of Egypt, and have brought us into this wretched place which can not be sowed, nor bringeth forth figs, nor vines, nor pomegranates, neither is there any water to drink? And Moses and Aaron leaving the multitude, went into the tabernacle of the covenant, and fell flat upon the ground, and cried to the Lord, and said: O Lord God, hear the cry of this people, and open to them thy treasure, a fountain of living water, that being satisfied they may cease to murmur. And the glory of the Lord appeared over them. And the Lord spoke to Moses, saying: Take the rod, and assemble the people together, thou and Aaron thy brother, and speak to the rock before them, and it shall yield waters. And when thou hast brought forth water out of the rock, all the multitude and their cattle shall drink. Moses therefore took the rod, which was before the Lord, as he had commanded him. And having gathered together the multitude before the rock, he said to them: Hear, ye rebellious and incredulous: Can we bring you forth water out of this rock? And when Moses had lifted up his hand, and struck the rock twice with the rod, there came forth water in great abundance, so that the people and their cattle drank. And the Lord said to Moses and Aaron: Because you have not believed me, to sanctify me before the children of Israel, you shall not bring these people

into the land, which I will give them. This is the water of contradiction, where the children of Israel strove with words against the Lord, and he was sanctified in them."

This Epistle warns us how displeasing even a small offense is before God, and how severely it is punished by Him. Moses and Aaron were in doubt as to whether God would again show His mercy towards this ungrateful and stiff-necked people, and give them water from the rock; and on account of this doubt both were punished by not being permitted to enter into the land of promise, and were left to die in the desert. Who then should not avoid the least occasion of sin?

The water from the rock, which Moses gave to the Israelites by command of God, refers figuratively to the wonderful living water, which the Lawgiver of the new testament, Jesus Christ, typified by Moses, has promised to His people, the Christians.

GOSPEL.—John 4: 5-42.

"At that time Jesus came to a city of Samaria which is called Sichar; near the piece of land which Jacob gave to his son Joseph. Now Jacob's well was there. Jesus therefore being wearied with his journey, sat thus on the well. It was about the sixth hour. There cometh a woman of Samaria to draw water. Jesus saith to her: Give me to drink. For his disciples were gone into the city to buy meats. Then that Samaritan woman saith to him: How dost thou, being a Jew, ask of me to drink, who am a Samaritan woman? For the Jews do not communicate with the Samaritans. Jesus answered, and said to her: If thou didst know the gift of God, and who is he that saith to thee, Give me to drink; thou perhaps wouldst have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water. The woman saith to him: Sir, thou hast nothing wherein to draw, and the well is deep: from whence then hast thou living water? Art thou greater than our father Jacob, who gave us the well, and drank thereof himself, and his children, and his cattle? Jesus answered, and said to her: Whosoever drinketh of this water, shall thirst again: but he that shall drink of the water that I will give him, shall not thirst for ever: but the water that I will give him, shall become in him a fountain of water springing up into life everlasting. The woman saith to him: Sir, give me this water, that I may not thirst, nor come hither to draw. Jesus saith to her: Go, call thy husband, and come hither." The woman answered, and said: I have no husband. Jesus said to her: Thou hast said well, I have no husband: for thou hast had five husbands: and he whom thou now hast is not thy husband. This thou hast said truly. The woman saith to him: Sir, I perceive that thou art a prophet. Our fathers adored on this mountain, and you say, that at Jerusalem is the place where men must adore. Jesus saith to her: Woman, believe me, that the hour



cometh, when you shall neither on this mountain, nor in Jerusalem adore the Father. You adore that which you know not: we adore that which we know; for salvation is of the Jews. But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true adorers shall adore the Father in spirit and in truth. For the Father also seeketh such to adore him. God is a spirit, and they that adore him, must adore him in spirit and in truth. The woman saith to him: I know that the Messias cometh, (who is called Christ,) therefore when he is come, he will tell us all things. Jesus saith to her: I am he who am speaking with thee. And immediately his disciples came: and they wondered that he talked with the woman. Yet no man said: What seekest thou, or why talkest thou with her? The woman therefore left her water-pot, and went her way into the city, and saith to the men there: Come, and see a man who has told me all things whatsoever I have done. Is not he the Christ? They went therefore out of the city, and came unto him. In the mean time the disciples prayed him, saying: Rabbi, eat. But he said to them: I have meat to eat which you know not. The disciples therefore said one to another: Hath any man brought him to eat? Jesus saith to them: My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, that I may perfect his work. Do not you say, there are yet four months, and then the harvest cometh? Behold I say to you, lift up your eyes, and see the countries, for they are white already to harvest. And he that reapeth receiveth wages, and gathereth fruit unto life everlasting: that both he that soweth and he that reapeth, may rejoice together. For in this is the saying true: that it is one man that soweth, and it is another that reapeth. I have sent you to reap that in which you did not labor: others have labored, and you have entered into their labors. Now of that city many of the Samaritans believed in him, for the word of the woman giving testimony: He told me all things whatsoever I have done. So when the Samaritans were come to him, they desired him that he would tarry there. And he abode there two days. And many more believed in him because of his own word. And they said to the woman: We now believe, not for thy saying: for we ourselves have heard him, and know that this is indeed the Saviour of the world."

The Samaritans, mentioned in the Gospel of to-day, and in many other passages of the holy scripture, formed originally the ten tribes of the Israelites who separated themselves from the Jewish nation after the death of Solomon, under the reign of his son Roboam. Under King Jeroboam they formed a kingdom of themselves, which was called the kingdom of Israel, in opposition to the kingdom of Juda, composed of the tribes of Juda and Benjamin. The capital city of Israel was Sichem, or Sichar, on Mount Ephraim. Afterwards King Somer, or Semer, built another city, called Samaria, after the mountain of the same name, and removed thither. From this capital the whole country received the name of Samaria. At that time there existed great enmity be-

tween the inhabitants of the two kingdoms, (Jews and Samaritans,) which resulted often in bloody wars between the two nations.

Salmanassar, the king of Assyria, finally gained possession of the city, destroyed it, and brought nearly the whole of its inhabitants captives to Assyria. His son and successor, Assarhaddon, sent a great many people from some of the Assyrian cities into the country of Samaria, in order to populate it. These new comers, by associating with the few remaining Israelites, became in course of time a new people, known as the Samaritans. As the people were a mixture of Jews and heathens, so was their religion a mixture of Jewish and heathen rites; they worshipping idols as well as the true God. The idolatry of the Samaritans lasted for a long time, until Ezechias, King of Juda, invited all the inhabitants of Judea to participate in the worship of the true God, destroying thus the worship of the idols. The hatred between the Jews and the Samaritans continued nevertheless, and had even become more bitter through the intermarriage of the Samaritans with the heathens, and because they, the Samaritans, were treated by the Jews with great contempt. This hatred was shown especially when the Jews were afterwards liberated from their Babylonian captivity, about one hundred and forty years after the Assyrian captivity, when they returned home to rebuild the temple of Jerusalem. The Samaritans offered their services for the rebuilding of the temple, but were refused by the Jews, because the Samaritans, as idolators, were considered unfit for such a work.

The Samaritans therefore endeavored to prevent the Jews from rebuilding the temple, the consequence of which was that the Jews could not finish it except under the protection of soldiers. Sanaballat, however, the Persian governor of Samaria, who was friendly to the Samaritans, erected a new hierarchy, and built a temple on Mount Charizim, whereby the separation between the Jews and Samaritans became more complete. This temple was afterwards destroyed by Joannes Hyrcanus, king of the Machabees, but the Samaritans continued to worship on the Mount.

Even in the time of Christ, this animosity between the Jews and Samaritans existed, especially on the part of the Jews, while the Samaritans, on the contrary, had become more tolerant. The name "Samaritan" was used by the Jews as an epithet of contempt, signifying in their estimation one who was an enemy of religion, as well as a wicked man.

The Saviour, however, in this Gospel, shows us how displeasing to Him was this prejudice of the Jews, and declared that He had come to save all men, and to love all without distinction. He therefore went through Samaria; for, as St. Chrysostom remarks, "He had an important duty to perform among the Samaritans. He wished to convert not only a great sinner in the person of the Samaritan woman, but also the inhabitants of the city to the belief in Him." The stay of our Saviour in Samaria, and especially His words and conduct at

that time, furnish us with beautiful and significant lessons, which merit our earnest consideration at this holy season.

The instruction given by our Saviour to the Samaritan woman was most impressive. When speaking of the water of Jacob's well, He refers to the living water which He would give to those that believe in Him, by which He meant the SACRAMENTS, wherewith He would refresh, animate, and sanctify mankind, by allaying their spiritual thirst for eternal life.

The Saviour also spoke to the Samaritan woman in regard to the worship of God in spirit and in truth, and declared that such worship would exist in the Church He was about to establish, contrary to the outward forms of the Jewish worship; evidently referring to the pure and sublime sacrifices of the new law, which, according to the prophecies of the old law, would be offered up in every place for all time. (Ps. 109: 4; Malach. 1: 11.)

Our Saviour also gave a beautiful lesson to the Apostles, for although tired from His journey, He refused the food which they offered Him, saying: "My meat is to do the will of Him that sent me, that I may perfect His work." To advance the honor of His heavenly Father, to fulfill His holy will, to teach and save mankind, especially the erring, was more for Him than meat;—an admonition very applicable at this holy season, for we are cautioned to think more of doing our duty, of advancing the honor of God, and the welfare of our neighbor, than of satisfying our sensual pleasures, and caring for temporal goods.

Finally we see in the sudden conversion of the Samaritan woman, and many other Samaritans, the mercy and love of Him who, according to His own words, had come to seek and to save that which was lost, and who is at the same time an example worthy of imitation for all who are in sin and error. How great was the change effected by the grace of God in the Samaritan woman, who was formerly a sinner! "She had come to draw water," remarks St. Chrysostom, "but when she had found the fountain of living water, she looked with contempt upon the source from which she had formerly drawn water, teaching us thereby to despise temporal goods, in order to gain eternal riches. What the disciples had done, she did, and even more; for they did not leave their nets until called, but she left her water-pot without being told to do so, and joyfully performed the office of an evangelist. She calls, not like Andrew and Philip, first one and then another, but stirs up a whole city, bringing a great multitude to Jesus; she hesitates not to say: 'He has told me all things whatsoever I have done;' although she could have said: 'Come, and see a prophet;' she publicly confessed the sins of her whole life, in order to gain all for Jesus, and that all might become disciples of Christ."

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On this day the Catholic Church celebrates also

## THE FEAST OF THE FIVE WOUNDS OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST.

INTROIT OF THE MASS.—Phil. 2.

“THE Lord Jesus Christ humbled himself, becoming obedient unto death, even the death of the cross; for which cause God also hath exalted him, and hath given him a name which is above every name.—The mercies of the Lord I will sing for ever: I will show forth thy truth with my mouth to generation and generation.” Glory be to the Father.

PRATER.

O God, who by the passion of Thy only begotten Son, and the effusion of His blood through five wounds, didst restore human nature, which had been ruined by sin: grant us, we beseech Thee, that we, who adore the wounds received by Him on earth, may deserve to obtain the fruit of His most precious blood in heaven. Through Christ.

(Epistle and Gospel, see Friday after Ash-Wednesday, The Commemoration of the Passion of our Lord Jesus Christ.)

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## FOURTH SUNDAY IN LENT.

CALLED ALSO

### SUNDAY “LÆTARE.”

INTROIT OF THE MASS.—Isaias 66: 10.

“REJOICE, O Jerusalem, and come together, all you that love her. Rejoice with joy, you that have been in sorrow, that you may exult and be filled from the breasts of your consolation. I rejoiced at the things that were said to me: we shall go into the house of the Lord.” Glory be to the Father.

These prophetic words of the old law contain an invitation to participate in the new Jerusalem, the Church of Christ, represented by the old Jewish capital, calling upon us to rejoice over the future conversion of the heathens, who were to become the chosen people. We too are called upon to rejoice over the fruits of the passion and death of our Saviour, by which the redemption of mankind and

their reception into the kingdom of God was effected. This joy should be increased by the sublime truths proposed to us in the Epistle and Gospel of to-day.

## PRAYER.

Grant, we beseech thee, O Almighty God, that we who are afflicted for our deeds, as we deserve, may be relieved by the comfort of Thy grace. Through our Lord.

EPISTLE.—Galatians 4 : 22–31.

“Brethren, it is written that Abraham had two sons: the one by a bond-woman, and the other by a free-woman. But he who was of the bond-woman, was born according to the flesh: but he of the free-woman, was by promise. Which things are said by an allegory. For these are the two testaments. The one from Mount Sina, engendering unto bondage; which is Agar: For Sina is a mountain in Arabia, which hath affinity to that Jerusalem, which now is, and is in bondage with her children. But that Jerusalem which is above, is free: which is our mother. For it is written: Rejoice, thou barren, that barest not: break forth and cry, thou that travailest not: for many are the children of the desolate, more than of her that hath a husband: Now we, brethren, as Isaac was, are the children of promise. But as then he, that was born according to the flesh, persecuted him that was after the spirit: so also it is now. But what saith the scripture? Cast out the bond-woman and her son; for the son of the bond-woman shall not be heir with the son of the free-woman. So then, brethren, we are not the children of the bond-woman, but of the free: by the freedom wherewith Christ has made us free.”

In these words the Apostle compares the two testaments or covenants (which the Lord made at different times with men) with the two sons of Abraham—Ismael the son of the bond-woman Agar, and ISAAC the son of his legitimate wife, the free-woman Sara. The old covenant or Judaism is therefore compared with the son of the bond-woman, because the Jews, bound to the manifold ceremonies of the old law, and not yet redeemed by Christ, were in bondage; but the new covenant is justly compared with Isaac, the son of the free-woman, because in the new covenant the Saviour has redeemed the members of His Church. He bought them from the bondage of Satan and freed them from the ceremonies and precepts of the old covenant.

The Church, therefore, shortly before the commemoration of the passion and death of Christ, proposes this passage of the holy Scriptures to us, so that we may meditate with joy upon the fruits of the passion of our Saviour, and pray with grateful hearts to Him who has redeemed us from the old and sad servitude, and raised us up to the freedom of the children of God.

GOSPEL.—John 6 : 1–15.

“After these things Jesus went over the sea of Galilee, which is that of Tibe-

rias: and a great multitude followed him, because they saw the miracles which he did on them that were diseased. Jesus therefore went up into a mountain, and there he sat with his disciples. Now the pasch, the festival day of the Jews, was near at hand. When Jesus therefore had lifted up his eyes, and seen that a very great multitude cometh to him, he said to Philip: Whence shall we buy bread that these may eat? And this he said to try him, for he himself knew what he would do. Philip answered him: Two hundred pennyworth of bread is not sufficient for them, that every one may take a little. One of his disciples, Andrew, the brother of Simon Peter, saith to him: There is a boy here that hath five barley loaves, and two fishes; but what are these among so many? Then Jesus said: Make the men sit down. Now there was much grass in the place. The men therefore sat down, in number about five thousand. And Jesus took the loaves: and when he had given thanks, he distributed to them that were sat down. In like manner also of the fishes as much as they would. And when they were filled, he said to his disciples: Gather up the fragments that remain, lest they be lost. They gathered up therefore, and filled twelve baskets with the fragments of the five barley loaves, which remained over and above to them that had eaten. So those men, when they had seen what a miracle Jesus had done, said: This is of a truth the prophet that is to come into the world. Jesus therefore when he knew that they would come to take him by force and make him king, fled again into the mountain himself alone."

A beautiful and instructive application of this miracle, as related in the Gospel, is made by St. Augustin. He says: "The miracles performed by our Lord Jesus Christ are divine works, and call upon man to acknowledge God even in visible things. As the substance of God can not be perceived with our eyes, and as the miracles performed in the government of the world and in the preservation of all created beings are looked upon by their continuance as nothing unusual: so has the Lord reserved to Himself, according to His great mercy, the power of working miracles in direct opposition to the laws of nature, so that those who are not astonished at the miracles wrought every day in their midst, should be astonished at what He did at other times, not because they were greater miracles, but because they do not happen as frequently.

"To govern the whole world is more astonishing than to feed five thousand men; notwithstanding which no one is astonished at the first, but every one wonders at the last. He who holds the world in His hand, is able to create a rich harvest out of a few grains. He therefore did so through His divine Omnipotence; for by the same power with which He multiplies the harvest out of a few grains, did He also multiply by His own hands the five loaves of bread (for the power was in the hands of Christ). These five loaves were grains, not put into the ground, but multiplied by Him who had created them.

"This miracle was seen by the eyes of the flesh, in order to make it clearer to



the eyes of our spirit, so that we may admire the invisible God by His visible works; and raised and purified by faith, we may desire to see Him, the Invisible, whom we know by means of visible things.

"This is not the only lesson which we should learn from the miracles of Christ. Let us ask what they teach us; for they have, if we understand them aright, a tongue; and as Christ Himself is the Word of God, in the same manner the actions of the Word are a word for us."

The Church draws our attention to this great miracle, which happened before the Jewish Easter, for the reason that our Easter is nigh, when we should, according to the will of our Saviour, and the express command of the Church, receive that heavenly bread which our Saviour promised to the Jews immediately after the multiplication of the loaves, and which He has left for all time to His faithful children, by instituting at the last Supper the most holy Eucharist and the holy sacrifice of the Mass. The very thought of this, the greatest mystery of the love of our Saviour Jesus Christ, should fill us with holy joy; but at the same time we should be encouraged to make good use of the remaining part of Lent by feeling sincere sorrow for our sins, and by worthily preparing ourselves for our Easter duty.

On this Sunday a special celebration takes place in Rome, the centre of Christianity—the blessing of the "Golden Rose" by the Pope; and hence this Sunday is also called "Rose-Sunday." The custom of the Pope carrying on this day a golden rose in his hand during a solemn procession, existed even in the twelfth century; but the blessing of the rose did not commence until the year one thousand four hundred. The rose is made of the finest gold, adorned with precious stones, and is blessed by the Pope on this day, either in the Church of the Holy Cross or at the Vatican. The following is the prayer: "O God, by whose power all things have been created, who governs the world in wisdom, and who is the joy and delight of the faithful, bless, we beseech Thee, this rose, full of beauty and perfume, which we on this day carry in our hands as a sign of spiritual joy, that Thy people, freed in a spiritual manner from Babylonian captivity, by the grace of Thy only begotten Son, who is the glory and joy of the people of Israel, may celebrate upon earth with sincere hearts the joy of that Jerusalem which is on high; and as Thy Church under this emblem rejoices in the honor of Thy name, grant, O Lord, we beseech Thee, to Thy people true and perfect joy; receive their fervent prayers, and forgive them their sins; fill them with faith, gladden them with Thy love, protect them according to Thy mercy, avert from them all misfortune, and grant to them all that is needful for their welfare; so that fruitful in good works, they may possess the sweet odor of this flower, which, coming from the root of Jesse, is mysteriously called the flower of the field, and the lily of the valley—meaning Christ—that with Him and with His Saints they may rejoice in the eternal joys of heaven."

After this prayer, the Pope perfumes the rose with balsam, musk, and incense, and sprinkles it with holy water, after which, accompanied by the Cardinals in solemn procession, he carries it to his chapel, places it upon the altar, and then says Mass. It is kept upon the altar until the holy Father presents it either to some sovereign, who has proved to be a faithful child of the Church, or to a State, or a city, or a corporation, as a mark of special favor.

The signification of the "Golden Rose" is derived from the joyful character of this day. It is an emblem of the Saviour, the beautiful flower of the root of Jesse, who delights and nourishes us in the most holy Eucharist.

Pope Innocent III. explains the meaning of the Golden Rose in the following manner :

"The Rose is composed of three different kinds of materials: gold, musk, and balsam. By means of the balsam, musk is united with the gold, because the substance of Christ is threefold: His divinity, His body, and His soul; but by means of the soul, the body is united with the divinity."

Other explanations are found in different letters of Popes, addressed to princes to whom they had presented the Rose. The one of Pope Eugenius III. to Alphonsus, king of Spain, to whom he presented the Golden Rose, is very remarkable. He writes: "As a proof of our esteem and affection, we send to your Majesty the Golden Rose, which, in memory of the sufferings and the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ, is every year carried by the Roman Pontiff on 'Lætare' Sunday, so that by looking at the Rose, you may endeavor, with the assistance of divine grace, to participate in the sufferings of Christ; and thus becoming worthy of the consolation of heavenly mercy, obtain the glory of resurrection."

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## FRIDAY AFTER THE FOURTH SUNDAY IN LENT.

INTROIT OF THE MASS.—Ps. 18.

"The meditation of my heart is always in thy sight, O Lord, my helper and redeemer. The heavens show forth the glory of God, and the firmament declareth the work of his hands." Glory be to the Father.

In these words the royal prophet praises God on account of the greatness of His works, and the Church repeats them to-day, in order that she may praise and glorify Him, our Lord and Saviour, for the great wonders of God related to us in the Epistle and Gospel of to-day, and in reference to the spiritual awakening of the sinner, represented by these wonders.

## PRAYER.

O, God, who renewest the world by unspeakable mysteries, grant, we beseech Thee, that Thy Church may profit by Thy eternal institutions, and not be deprived of Thy temporal assistance. Through Christ.

## EPISTLE.—3 Kings 17: 17-24.

“In those days the son of the woman, the mistress of the house, fell sick, and the sickness was grievous, so that there was no breath left in him. And she said to Elias: What have I to do with thee, thou man of God? art thou come to me that my iniquities should be remembered, and that thou shouldst kill my son? And Elias said to her: Give me thy son. And he took him out of her bosom, and carried him into the upper chamber where he abode, and laid him upon his own bed. And he cried to the Lord, and said: O Lord my God, hast thou afflicted also the widow, with whom I am after a sort maintained, so as to kill her son? And he stretched, and measured himself upon the child three times, and cried to the Lord, and said: O Lord my God, let the soul of this child, I beseech thee, return into his body. And the Lord heard the voice of Elias: and the soul of the child returned into him, and he revived. And Elias took the child, and brought him down from the upper chamber to the house below, and delivered him to his mother, and said to her: Behold thy son liveth. And the woman said to Elias: Now, by this I know that thou art a man of God, and the word of the Lord in thy mouth is true.”

The miraculous restoration to life of the son of the widow of Sarepta, who was a pagan, by the prophet Elias, is a type of the restoration to life of Lazarus by our Saviour Himself. According to the interpretation of St. Augustine, the reviving of this pagan boy is a type of the spiritual resurrection of the pagan nations from the death of infidelity unto the life of the true Christian faith. “The nations,” remarks this great doctor of the Church, “were dead in their sins, but God raised them from the dead by descending Himself into the depths of their misery, and by measuring Himself with them. The measuring of Elias upon the child three times refers to the mystery of the most blessed Trinity, because Christian people are raised from the dead not by the Father without the Son, nor by the Father and the Son without the Holy Ghost, but by the power of the three divine persons, that is by the blessed Trinity.”

## GOSPEL.—John 11: 1-45.

“At that time there was a certain man sick, named Lazarus, of Bethania, of the town of Mary and of Martha her sister. (And Mary was she that anointed the Lord with ointment and wiped his feet with her hair: whose brother Lazarus was sick.) His sisters therefore sent to him, saying: Lord, behold, he whom thou lovest is sick. And Jesus hearing it, said to them: This sickness is



not unto death, but for the glory of God : that the son of God may be glorified by it. Now Jesus loved Martha, and her sister Mary, and Lazarus. When he had heard therefore that he was sick, he still remained in the same place two days : then after that he said to his disciples : Let us go into Judea again. The disciples say to him : Rabbi, the Jews but now sought to stone thee : and goest thou thither again ? Jesus answered : Are there not twelve hours of the day ? If a man walk in the day, he stumbleth not, because he seeth the light of this world : but if he walk in the night he stumbleth, because the light is not in him. These things he said ; and after that he said to them : Lazarus our friend sleepeth : but I go that I may awake him out of sleep. His disciples therefore said : Lord, if he sleep, he shall do well. But Jesus spoke of his death ; and they thought that he spoke of the repose of sleep. Then therefore Jesus said to them plainly : Lazarus is dead ; and I am glad for your sakes, that I was not there, that you may believe : but let us go to him. Thomas therefore, who is called Didymus, said to his fellow-disciples : Let us also go, that we may die with him. Jesus therefore came and found that he had been four days already in the grave. (Now Bethania was near Jerusalem, about fifteen furlongs off.) And many of the Jews were come to Martha and Mary, to comfort them concerning their brother. Martha therefore, as soon as she heard that Jesus was come, went to meet him ; but Mary sat at home. Martha therefore said to Jesus : Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother hath not died. But now also I know that whatsoever thou wilt ask of God, God will give it thee. Jesus saith to her : Thy brother shall rise again. Martha saith to him : I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day. Jesus said to her : I am the resurrection and the life : he that believeth in me although he be dead, shall live : and every one that liveth and believeth in me, shall not die for ever. Believest thou this ? She saith to him : Yea, Lord, I have believed that thou art Christ the Son of the living God, who art come into this world. And when she had said these things, she went, and called her sister Mary secretly, saying : The master is come and calleth for thee. She, as soon as she heard this, riseth quickly and cometh to him. For Jesus was not yet come into the town : but he was still in that place where Martha had met him. The Jews therefore, who were with her in the house and comforted her, when they saw Mary that she rose up speedily and went out, followed her, saying : She goeth to the grave, to weep there. When Mary therefore was come where Jesus was, seeing him she fell down at his feet and saith to him : Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died. Jesus therefore, when he saw her weeping and the Jews that were come with her, weeping, groaned in the spirit, and troubled himself, and said : Where have you laid him ? They say to him : Lord, come and see. And Jesus wept. The Jews therefore said : Behold how he loved him. But some of them said : Could not he that opened the eyes of the man born blind, have caused that this man should not die ? Jesus therefore again groaning in himself cometh to the sepulchre : now it was a

cave; and a stone was laid over it. Jesus saith: Take away the stone. Martha, the sister of him that was dead, saith to him: Lord, by this time he stinketh, for he is now of four days. Jesus saith to her: Did not I say to thee, that if thou wilt believe, thou shalt see the glory of God? They took therefore the stone away. And Jesus lifting his eyes said: Father, I give thee thanks that thou hast heard me. And I knew that thou hearest me always, but because of the people who stand about have I said it: that they may believe that thou hast sent me. When he had said these things, he cried with a loud voice: Lazarus, come forth. And presently he that had been dead came forth, bound feet and hands with winding-bands, and his face was bound about with a napkin. Jesus said to them: Loose him and let him go. Many therefore of the Jews who were come to Mary and Martha, and had seen the things that Jesus did, believed in him."

Our holy Mother, the Church proposes to us the remarkable event of the resuscitation of Lazarus, because it happened shortly before the passion and death of Christ. It is offered for our consideration at this holy season of penance, because it is the figure of our spiritual resuscitation to a new life, and is at the same time an earnest admonition to us that, if we are spiritually dead by sin, we shall rise from the grave of our sins to a new and better life, as did Lazarus from the sleep of death. The holy Pope Gregory the Great says: "Every sinner is bound in his winding bands as long as he conceals his guilt, but the dead comes forth when the sinner voluntarily confesses his iniquity. To Lazarus was said: 'Come forth!'—just as if it was said to every sinner: 'Why do you hide your guilt? Come forth by a sincere confession, since by denying your sins, they are buried within you! Let the dead therefore come forth, that is, let the sinner confess his guilt, and as the disciples loosened the bands of him who had come forth, so will the pastors of the Church remove the punishment deserved by the sinner, when he confesses his sins.'"

The resurrection of Lazarus is also, as our Saviour Himself intimates in his conversation with Martha, a type of the resurrection of the dead at the last judgment, through Him, the Son of God. St. Augustin very appropriately remarks: "Of all the miracles performed by our Lord Jesus Christ, that of the resurrection of Lazarus deserves special praise. But considering who worked it, we should rejoice rather than wonder at it. He who raised man from the dead, has created man, for He is the only-begotten of the Father, by whom all things are made. When therefore all things are made by Him, what wonder if one is restored to life by Him, since so many receive life daily from Him? The creation of man is more wonderful than the raising him from the dead, and He has designed Himself not only to create man, but to raise him from the dead. Although He gives life to all, He restores but few to life; if He wished to do so, however, He could raise from the dead all who are

in the grave. But this He has reserved until the day of judgment; for as He raised Lazarus, who had been already four days in the grave, so will we hear Him saying: 'The hour cometh, wherein all that are in the graves shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and shall come forth.' (John 5: 28.) He restored to life Lazarus, who was already in a state of putrefaction; but there was yet visible in him the form of the body. At the last judgment, however, he will give life to the dust. He performed this miracle to show His power, that we may believe in Him, and prepare ourselves for a resurrection of life, and not of judgment; for they that have done good things shall come forth unto the resurrection of life, but they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of judgment." (John 5: 29.)

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On this day the Catholic Church also celebrates

### THE FEAST OF THE MOST PRECIOUS BLOOD OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST.

INTROIT OF THE MASS.—Apoc. 5.

"Thou hast redeemed us, O Lord, in thy blood, out of every tribe, and tongue, and people, and nation, and hast made us to our God a kingdom. The mercies of the Lord I will sing for ever: I will show forth thy truth with my mouth to generation and generation."

(Epistle: See Epistle of Passion Sunday.)

GOSPEL.—John 19: 30-35.

"At that time, when Jesus had taken the vinegar, he said: It is consummated. And bowing his head he gave up the ghost. Then the Jews (because it was the Parasceve) that the bodies might not remain upon the cross on the Sabbath-day (for that was a great Sabbath-day), besought Pilate that their legs might be broken, and that they might be taken away. The soldiers therefore came, and they broke the legs of the first, and of the other that was crucified with him. But after they were come to Jesus, when they saw that he was already dead, they did not break his legs. But one of the soldiers with a spear opened his side, and immediately there came out blood and water. And he that saw it hath given testimony, and his testimony is true."

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## FIFTH SUNDAY IN LENT.

CALLED ALSO

## PASSION SUNDAY, OR JUDICA.

THIS Sunday being one of the principal Sundays of the Ecclesiastical year, is called Passion-Sunday, because the Church, from this Sunday until Easter, spends her time in meditating upon the sufferings of Christ, and by her prayers, chants, and ceremonies, invites the faithful to do the same. We should consider the fruits of this meditation, and excite within our hearts gratitude for the infinite love of our Saviour, to which the Church refers in the words of the preface: "Who didst effect the salvation of mankind on the wood of the cross: that from whence death came, thence life might arise, and that he, who overcame by the tree, may also by the tree be overcome, through Christ our Lord." The crucifixes on this Sunday are covered with purple, and remain covered until Good Friday, because our Saviour kept Himself concealed from the eyes of the people during the last days of His passion, and because the Church wishes to express outwardly her grief for the sufferings of her heavenly Bridegroom.

INTROIT OF THE MASS.—Ps. 42.

"Judge me, O God, and distinguish my cause from the nation that is not holy; deliver me from the unjust and deceitful man, for thou art God, my strength. Send forth thy light and thy truth: they have conducted me, and brought me unto thy holy hill, and into thy tabernacles. Judge me."

In these words of the suffering Saviour, spoken through the mouth of the royal prophet, the Church commences the holy season which is to be especially devoted to meditating upon the passion of Christ.

PRAYER.

We beseech thee, Almighty God, mercifully look upon Thy family, that by Thy bounty it may be governed in body, and by Thy preservation be kept in mind. Through Christ.

EPISTLE.—Heb. 9: 11–15.

"Brethren, Christ, being come an high-priest of the good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle not made with hand, that is, not of this creation: Neither by the blood of goats, or of calves, but by his own blood, entered once into the Holies, having obtained eternal redemption. For if the blood of goats and of oxen, and the ashes of a heifer being sprinkled, sanctify such as are defiled, to the cleansing of the flesh: How much more shall the blood of Christ, who by the Holy Ghost offered himself unspotted unto God, cleanse our con-

science from dead works, to serve the living God? And therefore he is the mediator of the new testament: that by means of his death for the redemption of those transgressions, which were under the former testament, they that are called may receive the promise of eternal inheritance, in Christ Jesus, our Lord."

In this Epistle the Apostle compares the great and bloody sacrifice of Christ on the cross, and its beneficial effects, with the typified offerings of the old law, where the blood of animals only was sprinkled, and their flesh was offered up to the Lord God. If the sacrifice of animals, remarks St. Paul, was pleasing to God, and on account of its typical and higher signification possessed a certain power to sanctify such as were defiled to the cleansing of the flesh, how much more shall the blood of Christ have beneficial effect upon man? This great truth furnishes us with abundant matter for meditation in the holy time of the passion, and encourages us by penance, and by a good and virtuous life, to become partakers of the glorious fruit of this great sacrifice.

GOSPEL.—John 8: 46-59.

"At that time Jesus said to the multitude of the Jews: Which of you shall convince me of sin? If I say the truth to you, why do you not believe me? He that is of God, heareth the words of God. Therefore you hear them not because you are not of God. The Jews therefore answered, and said to him: Do not we say well that thou art a Samaritan, and hast a devil? Jesus answered: I have not a devil: but I honor my Father, and you have dishonored me. But I seek not my own glory: there is one that seeketh and judgeth. Amen, amen, I say to you: If any man keep my word, he shall not see death forever. The Jews therefore said: Now we know that thou hast a devil. Abraham is dead, and the prophets; and thou sayest: If any man keep my word, he shall not taste death forever. Art thou greater than our father Abraham, who is dead? and the prophets are dead. Whom dost thou make thyself? Jesus answered: If I glorify myself, my glory is nothing. It is my Father that glorifieth me, of whom you say that he is your God. And you have not known him, but I know him. And if I shall say that I know him not, I shall be like to you, a liar. But I do know him, and do keep his word. Abraham your father rejoiced that he might see my day: he saw it, and was glad. The Jews therefore said to him: Thou art not yet fifty years old, and hast thou seen Abraham? Jesus said to them: Amen, amen, I say to you, before Abraham was made, I am. They took up stones therefore to cast at him. But Jesus hid himself, and went out of the temple."

This Gospel contains a portion of the important Sermon which our Saviour delivered in the Temple to the Jews, not long before His passion, to instruct them concerning His divinity. "He that is of God, heareth the words of God."

St. Gregory makes the following beautiful application of the above words. He says: "Terrible indeed are these words of our Saviour. If, therefore, he that is of God heareth the words of God, and he is not of God who heareth them not, every one should ask himself whether he has received the words of God into his heart, and thus understand his position. The eternal Truth commands us to desire after heaven, to destroy the lusts of our flesh, to avoid the vain glory of this world, not to envy the happiness of others, and to give from our abundance. Every one therefore should examine himself, whether these words of God are well received in his heart, and he will know then if he is of God. There are men who do not wish to listen to the commands of God with the ears of the flesh; others hear them, but they make no impression on their minds; others again are willing to receive the word of God, and show their penitence by shedding tears, but afterwards return to their sins. All these hear not the words of God, because they refuse to put them into practice. Therefore keep your life before the eyes of your mind, and consider with earnestness these terrible words, proceeding from the mouth of the eternal Truth: 'They hear them not, because they are not of God.'"

The Jews, as they had done before, exhibited on this occasion their unbelief in the Saviour, whose kind admonitions they answered with insults and calumnies. They even threatened to kill Him, but the Saviour forsook them, and by virtue of His omnipotence hid Himself from them. St. Augustin remarks: "He left them, because they would not listen to His admonitions, and by His omnipotence passed invisibly through their midst, as if, like any other man, He had fled from the stones they cast at Him; but woe to those from whose stony hearts He fled!"

This is an exhortation for us to receive the teachings of Christ with a willing heart, following them better than did the unfortunate Jews, and remembering (especially at this holy season) the words of the royal prophet: "To-day, if you shall hear his voice, harden not your hearts." (Ps. 94: 8.)

## FRIDAY AFTER PASSION-SUNDAY.

INTROIT OF THE MASS.—Ps. 69.

"Have mercy on me, O Lord, for I am afflicted: deliver me out of the hands of my enemies, and from them that persecute me: let me not be confounded, O Lord, for I have called upon thee. In thee, O Lord, have I hoped, let me never be confounded; deliver me in thy justice. Have mercy."



The holy Church repeats very appropriately at this season these words of the royal prophet, spoken by him at the time of his persecution by king Saul.

PRAYER.

Mercifully infuse thy grace into our hearts, we beseech Thee, O Lord, that refraining from sin by voluntary chastisements, we may be rather afflicted in time, than condemned to punishment for eternity. Through Christ.

EPISTLE.—Jerem. 17: 13-19.

"In those days Jeremias said: O Lord, all that forsake thee, shall be confounded; they that depart from thee shall be written in the earth, because they have forsaken the Lord, the vein of living waters. Heal me, O Lord, and I shall be healed; save me, and I shall be saved, for thou art my praise. Behold they say to me: Where is the word of the Lord? let it come. And I am not troubled, following thee for my pastor, and I have not desired the day of man, thou knowest. That which went out of my lips, hath been right in thy sight. Be not thou a terror unto me, thou art my hope in the day of affliction. Let them be confounded that persecute me, and let not me be confounded; let them be afraid, and let not me be afraid; bring upon them the day of affliction, and with a double destruction destroy them, Lord our God!"

The prophet Jeremias, who had announced in the name of the Lord to the wicked Jews, and to the kings and princes of the nation, the great tribulations which, as a punishment for their sins, should come over them, was on that account mocked at, despised, insulted, and persecuted by this wicked people. His words, as mentioned in the Epistle, contain a fervent prayer for help against his enemies, and are filled with denunciations against the blaspheming Jews. The Church proposes this passage of the prophecies of Jeremias to us, because this holy servant of God was the figure of our Saviour, who was unjustly persecuted.

GOSPEL.—John 11: 47-54

"At that time: The chief-priests and the Pharisees gathered a council, and said: What do we, for this man doth many miracles? If we let him alone so, all will believe in him, and the Romans will come, and take away our place and nation. But one of them named Caiphas, being the high-priest that year, said to them: You know nothing. Neither do you consider that it is expedient for you that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not. And this he spoke not of himself: but being the high-priest of that year, he prophesied that Jesus should die for the nation. And not only for the nation, but to gather together in one the children of God, that were dispersed. From that day, therefore, they devised to put him to death. Wherefore Jesus walked no more openly among the Jews, but he went into a country near the

desert, unto a city that is called Ephrem, and there he abode with his disciples."

The Gospel of to-day is connected with the narrative of the resurrection of Lazarus (see Gospel of last Friday). Some of the Jews who had been eye-witnesses of the miracle, and who doubtless were among the enemies of Christ, had told the Pharisees of it; but the high-priest and the Pharisees, instead of being converted to Christ by this undeniable miracle, consulted among themselves how they could kill Him, and how they could destroy His great influence over the people. The unfortunate wretches! They acknowledged the miracle of the Lord, but would not acknowledge Him who had worked it by the power of His divine will; the greater evidence they had of His omnipotence, the more hardened were their hearts; they pretending that, on account of the miracle, the people would make Him their king, thus inciting the Romans against them. They determined to put to death the Just and Holy one. St. Augustine says: "The wicked Jews were more zealous as to the manner in which they could injure and kill the Saviour, than to the means of escaping eternal perdition; they feared to lose temporal goods, and had no consideration for eternal life, and thus they lost both. For after the passion and glorious resurrection of the Lord, the Romans deprived them of their country, by conquering their nation, and imprisoning their men; and in addition to this, the words of the Lord were applied to them: 'The children of the kingdom shall be cast out into the exterior darkness.'" (Matt. 8: 12.)

Caiphas, the wicked servant of the sanctuary, who by bribery had obtained the dignity and office of high-priest, intended by the words: "It is expedient for you that one man should die for the people, and not that the whole nation perish," not only the death of the Saviour, whom he hated; but without his knowledge, his words became a prophecy in regard to the effects of Christ's death, since mankind thereby were truly saved from the perdition into which they would otherwise have fallen. St. Chrysostom, in reference to these words of Caiphas, says: "Behold, what power lies in the dignity of the high-priest! Since he received this office, although unworthy of it, he prophesied, not knowing what he said; the Spirit of God made use only of his mouth, and not of his unclean meaning. In the same manner others have prophesied, as Nabuchodonosor, Pharaoh, and Balaam. It is evident who urged them on. Great is the power of the divine Spirit! From the wicked heart of Caiphas it brought forth words full of a most wonderful prophecy. It is expedient that one man should die for the people, that the dispersed children of God may be gathered together. The Evangelist calls the heathen children of God in reference to what should happen, as Christ also said: 'And other sheep I have'—calling the heathen so, on account of what should take place."

On this day the Church also celebrates

## THE FEAST OF THE SEVEN DOLORS OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY.

THE Church wishes to remind us by this feast (celebrated on the last Friday before Good-Friday) of the great and profound compassion of the Blessed Virgin for her beloved and suffering Son. This feast is justly placed in connection with this holy season, although dedicated to the mother of Christ, because the many sufferings of her divine Son, from His birth in the stable until His death on the cross, were at the same time the sufferings of the Blessed Virgin, if not always in the body, at least in her soul, according to the prophecy of the just Simeon, that "a sword would pierce her soul." The sufferings of the divine Son and His holy Mother are therefore inseparable.

As the sufferings of Christ were in every way the greatest and the most painful ever borne by any man, surpassing by far all the pains of the martyrs, according to Jeremias, the prophet, saying: "O all ye that pass by the way attend and see if there be any sorrow like to my sorrow;" (Lament. 1: 12.)—in the same degree were the sorrows of the Blessed Mother greater than all the pains and sufferings of any created being, the holy martyrs included. She is therefore justly called the Queen of Martyrs, but at the same time she is called also *Mater dolorosissima*, or the most dolorous Mother, because no mother ever suffered so many afflictions as did the Blessed Mother of our Lord.

The Church therefore on this day very appropriately applies to Mary, the most sorrowful Mother of the Lord, the words of Jeremias the prophet: "To what shall I compare thee? or to what shall I liken thee, O daughter of Jerusalem? To what shall I equal thee, that I may comfort thee, O virgin daughter of Sion? For great as the sea is thy destruction: who shall heal thee?" (Lament. 2: 13.)

St. Bernard, who cherished an especial veneration for the Blessed Virgin, preached on one occasion an admirable sermon on the feast of the Seven Dolours: "The martyrdom of the Blessed Virgin is announced to us not only in the prophecy of Simeon, but also in the passion of Christ. He is set (says the holy Simeon of the Infant Jesus) for a sign which shall be contradicted, and 'thy own soul (this he said to Mary) a sword shall pierce.' Truly it has pierced thy soul, O Blessed Mother, for how could it have pierced the flesh of your Son, and not have pierced your soul? And when your divine Son had given up His spirit, the cruel spear, in opening His side, did not touch His soul, but pierced yours; for His soul had left His body, but yours could not be separated from Him. Grief pierced your soul with such force, that we hail you justly as the Queen of Martyrs, for you suffered more in your soul than any one ever suffered in the body. More than a sword must have pierced your heart at hearing



the words: 'Woman, behold thy Son!' (John 19: 26.) O, what a change! John is given to you instead of your Son, the disciple instead of the Lord, the servant instead of the master, the son of Zebedee instead of the Son of God, a mere man instead of a true God! How must the hearing of these words have pierced your tender, loving soul, when the rehearsal of them wounds even our hard hearts! Wonder not that Mary was called a martyr in regard to the sorrows of her soul; he only should wonder at it who does not remember what St. Paul said of the pagans, that their greatest crime consisted in not having any affection. Far may it be from the heart of Mary, far from those who serve her. But some one may ask, did she not know that He had to die? Most undoubtedly. Did she grieve for the crucified? With the greatest sorrow. But who are you, my brother, and from whence do you derive your wisdom, that you wonder rather at the compassionate Mother, than at her suffering Son? He could suffer death in His body, but could she not die with Him in her heart? The first was done through love, a greater than which no one ever felt; the other was also done through love, the equal of which no one ever possessed."

The feast of the Seven Dolors was first instituted by the Council of Cologne, held in the year one thousand four hundred and twenty-three, in order to repair what the Hussites had done against the veneration of the Blessed Virgin Mary, whom they, like all heretics, had assailed with many calumnies and insults; in particular rejecting the image of the Mother of Dolors, with the body of her dead Son resting upon her lap. This feast was called originally the Feast of the Compassion of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

The following are known as the Seven Dolors of the Blessed Virgin:—1. At the prophecy of Simeon, and the circumcision of her divine Son. 2. At the flight into Egypt. 3. At her losing Him for three days in the temple. 4. At seeing Him carrying the cross. 5. At His crucifixion. 6. At beholding His side pierced with a spear, and His body taken down from the cross. 7. At His burial.

#### INTROIT OF THE MASS.—John 19.

"There stood by the cross of Jesus, his mother, and his mother's sister, Mary of Cleophas, and Salome, and Mary Magdalen. Woman, behold thy Son, said Jesus, and to the disciple: Behold thy Mother." Glory be to the Father.

#### PRAYER.

O Lord, in whose passion, according to the prophecy of Simeon, a sword of sorrow pierced the most sweet soul of Mary, mother and virgin, grant, in Thy mercy, that we may call to mind with veneration her transfixion and sufferings; and by the glorious merits and prayers of all the Saints who stood faithfully by

the cross, interceding for us, may experience the happy effects of Thy passion. Who livest.

EPISTLE.—Judith 13 : 22-25.

“The Lord hath blessed thee by his power, because by thee he hath brought our enemies to nought. And Ozias, the prince of the people of Israel, said to her : Blessed art thou, O daughter, by the Lord the most high God, above all women upon the earth. Blessed be the Lord who made heaven and earth, who hath directed thee to the cutting off the head of the prince of our enemies. Because He hath so magnified thy name this day, that thy praise shall not depart out of the mouth of men who shall be mindful of the power of the Lord for ever, for that thou hast not spared thy life, by reason of the distress and tribulation of thy people, but hast prevented our ruin in the presence of our God.”

The Catholic Church applies these words, spoken by Ozias, prince of the Israelites, to Judith, after she, at the risk of her own life, had beheaded Holofernes, the overbearing and insolent enemy of her people,—to the Blessed Virgin Mary, of whom Judith was the type, and who sacrificed the precious life of her Divine Son, in order to free mankind from the servitude of a greater oppressor—the devil.

#### SEQUENCE. STABAT MATER.

At the cross her station keeping,  
 Stood the mournful mother weeping,  
     Close to Jesus to the last.  
 Through her heart, his sorrow sharing,  
 All his bitter anguish bearing,  
     Now at length the sword had pierced.  
 O how sad and sore distressed  
 Was that mother, highly blest  
     Of the sole begotten One.  
 Christ above in torments hangs,  
 She beneath beholds the pangs  
     Of her dying, glorious Son.  
 Is there one who would not weep,  
 Whelmed in miseries so deep,  
     Christ's dear mother to behold?  
 Can the human heart refrain  
 From partaking in her pain—  
     In that Mother's pain untold?  
 Bruised, derided, cursed, defiled,  
 She beheld her tender Child  
     All with bloody scourges rent—  
 For the sins of his own nation,  
 Saw him hang in desolation,  
     Till his spirit forth he sent.

O then, Mother, fount of love,  
 Touch my spirit from above,  
     Make my heart with thine accord.  
 Make me feel as thou hast felt,  
 Make my soul to glow and melt  
     With the love of Christ, my Lord.  
 Holy mother! pierce me through,  
 In my heart each wound renew  
     Of my Saviour crucified.  
 Let me share with thee his pain,  
 Who for all my sins was slain,  
     Who for me in torments died.  
 Let me mingle tears with thee,  
 Mourning him who mourned for me,  
     All the days that I may live.  
 By the cross with thee to stay,  
 There with thee to weep and pray,  
     Is all I ask of thee to give.  
 Virgin of all Virgins best,  
 Listen to my fond request:  
     Let me share thy grief divine.  
 Let me to my latest breath  
 In my body bear the death  
     Of that dying Son of thine.  
 Wounded with his every wound,  
 Steep my soul, till it hath swooned,  
     In his very blood away.  
 Burning with love's holy fire,  
 Screen me from the vengeful ire,  
     Of my greatest Judge above.  
 May the cross my guardian be,  
 My Saviour's death defense to me,  
     And source of every grace,  
 While my body here decays,  
 May my soul thy goodness praise,  
     Safe in paradise with thee.

## GOSPEL.—John 19: 25-27.

"At that time, there stood by the cross of Jesus, his mother, and his mother's sister, Mary of Cleophas, and Mary Magdalene. When Jesus therefore had seen his mother and the disciple standing, whom he loved, he saith to his mother: Woman, behold thy son. After that, he saith to the disciple: Behold thy mother. And from that hour the disciple took her to his own."

The Church presents to us in this Gospel the greatest sorrow of the Blessed Mother of God, when she stood under the cross of her dying Son, with John the faithful disciple, together with Mary of Cleophas and Mary Magdalene, for in



that moment her Son was pierced by the sword of sorrow. She suffered then more than martyrdom. Her love was stronger than death, because in the death of Christ she herself suffered death. St. Augustine very beautifully remarks: "Mary stood there most patiently and faithfully; for when the disciples had fled—when the men had left him, Mary alone remained by the cross, to the honor of the entire female sex. She stood there in all modesty, as became her virginity, for she did not rend her garments from excessive grief, she cursed not, she murmured not, she did not call down the vengeance of God upon His enemies, but she stood there as a pure and modest virgin, and although overwhelmed with grief and sorrow, perfectly resigned to the will of God."

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### HOLY WEEK.

THE last week of Lent is especially devoted to the memory of the passion and death of Christ, and on account of its important signification, has been always considered by the Catholic Church as one of the most important weeks of the whole Ecclesiastical Year. This week is called in the language of the Church the Holy or Great Week, and on account of the great mysteries which took place at that time, is often called the WEEK OF SORROWS.

St. Chrysostom in speaking of Holy Week, says: "We call this week the great week, not because it is of longer duration, but because Christ at that time worked the greatest mysteries, and bestowed upon us great and inexpressible benefits. It was in Holy Week that the long war was ended, death destroyed, the curse removed, the tyranny of the devil destroyed, his instruments scattered, the reconciliation between God and man effected, the heavens opened, the angels placed in communication with man, that which was separated united, the barrier removed, and the King of Peace instituted peace in Heaven and on earth. Therefore we call this week the great week, because Our Lord has given us during it so many gifts and graces. Nearly all Christians for this reason prolong their fast, and endeavor by watching, attending divine service, and giving alms, to show the great honor due to this week; for, since the Lord has bestowed upon us so many benefits during this week, why should we not consider it our duty to testify to Him, as much as we can, our respect and veneration?"

In the earliest time of Christianity, on account of the special sanctity of this week, all public business, all noisy occupations, by which the devotion of the faithful would be disturbed, and all amusements were suspended. For this reason it was called also the "QUIET WEEK." Besides, many pardons were granted by the Christian emperors at the beginning of this week, in commemoration of our Saviour having redeemed mankind through His death, from the

bondage of Satan. It was therefore called also the **GOLDEN WEEK**, or the week **FOR GRANTING PARDON**.

During Holy Week the fast was then observed with even greater strictness than on the other fast-days of the year, and in the selection of food the same strictness was observed. Only bread and water, and sometimes a little dried fruit was taken, and even the indifferent Christian was careful to observe the fast of this week.

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### PALM-SUNDAY.

THE first day in Holy week, **PALM-SUNDAY**, is one of the principal Sundays of the Ecclesiastical Year, for it reminds us of the last solemn entrance of Jesus into Jerusalem, where the people, festively arrayed, met Him with palms in their hands. From this fact, and in memory of this event, the day is called **PALM-SUNDAY**, and palms are blessed and carried in solemn procession.

Although the last entrance of Christ into Jerusalem was hailed with joyful acclamations by the gayly-dressed populace, it nevertheless has a special signification for us, because in a few days afterwards He was loaded with ignominy and cruelly put to death;—so in the ceremonies of to-day are blended together joy and sorrow, for between the joyful chants, sung at the blessing of the palms and during the procession, come recollections of the Passion of the Lord, as shown in the different parts of the Mass.

The blessing of the palms takes place before the High Altar in the following manner:

The Choir first sings :

Hosanna to the Son of David! blessed is He that comes in the name of the Lord. O King of Israel! Hosanna in the highest!

Then the Priest says :

*V.* The Lord be with you.

*R.* And with thy spirit.

Let us pray.

O God! whom to love is righteousness; multiply in our hearts the gifts of Thy unspeakable grace: and as by the death of Thy Son Thou hast made us hope for those things, which we believe, grant that by His resurrection we may arrive at the happy end of our journey: who liveth and reigneth, &c.

After this the Sub-Deacon sings the following Lesson.—Exodus 15: 27; 16: 1-7.

“In those days, the children of Israel came into Elim, where there were twelve fountains of water and seventy palm-trees; and they encamped by the waters. And they set forward from Elim, and all the multitude of the children of Israel came into the desert of Sin, which is between Elim and Sinai, the fifteenth day of the second month, after they came out of the land of Egypt. And all the congregation of the children of Israel murmured against Moses and Aaron in the wilderness. And the children of Israel said to them: would to God we had died by the hand of the Lord in the land of Egypt, when we sat over the flesh pots and ate bread to the full; why have you brought us into this desert, that you might destroy all the multitude with famine? And the Lord said to Moses, behold, I will rain bread from heaven for you; let the people go forth and gather what is sufficient for every day, that I may prove them whether they will walk in my law, or no. But the sixth day let them provide for to bring in; and let it be double to that they were wont to gather every day. And Moses and Aaron said to the children of Israel: in the evening you shall know that the Lord hath brought you forth out of the land of Egypt: and in the morning ye shall see the glory of the Lord.”

*R.* The chief priests and the Pharisees gathered a council and said, what do we, for this man doth many miracles? If we let him alone so, all men will believe in him; \* and the Romans will come and take away your place and nation.

*V.* But one of them, named Caiphas, being the high-priest that year, said to them: it is expedient for you that one man die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not. From that day therefore, they devised to put him to death, saying: \* And the Romans, &c.

*Another R.* On mount Olivet he prayed to His Father; O Father! if it is possible, let this chalice pass from me. \* The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak; Thy will be done.

*V.* Watch ye and pray that ye enter not into temptation. \* The spirit, &c.”

Then the Deacon sings the following Gospel, with the usual ceremonies:

A continuation of the holy Gospel, according to St. Matthew, 21: 1-9.

“At that time, when Jesus drew nigh to Jerusalem, and was come to Bethphage, unto Mount Olivet; then he sent two disciples, saying to them, go ye into the village that is over against you, and immediately you shall find an ass tied, and a colt with her; loose them, and bring them to me; and if any man shall say any thing to you, say ye that the Lord hath need of them, and forthwith he will let them go. Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled, which was spoken by the prophet, saying: Tell ye the daughter of Sion, behold thy king cometh to thee, meek, and sitting upon an ass, and a colt, the foal of her that is used to the yoke. And the disciples going, did as Jesus commanded



them. And they brought the ass and the colt, and laid their garments upon them, and made him sit thereon. And a very great multitudes spread their garments in the way; and others cut boughs from the trees, and strewed them in the way; and the multitudes that went before and that followed, cried, saying: Hosanna to the Son of David! blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord."

The Blessing of the Palms. The Priest standing at the corner of the Epistle, says:

*V.* The Lord be with you.

*R.* And with thy spirit.

Let us pray.

Increase, O God! the faith of them that hope in Thee, and mercifully hear the prayers of Thy suppliants; let Thy manifold mercy come upon us, and let these branches of palm-trees, or olive-trees, be blessed; and, as in a figure of the Church, Thou didst multiply Noah going out of the Ark, and Moses going out of Egypt with the children of Israel; so let us, carrying palms and branches of olive-trees, go and meet Christ with good works, and enter through Him into eternal joy: who with Thee, and the Holy Ghost liveth and reigneth, one God, world without end.

*R.* Amen.

*V.* The Lord be with you.

*R.* And with thy spirit.

*V.* Lift up your hearts.

*R.* We have them lifted up to the Lord.

*V.* Let us give thanks to the Lord, our God.

*R.* It is meet and just.

It is truly meet and just, right and profitable to salvation, that we should at all times, and in all places, give Thee thanks, O holy Lord, almighty Father, and eternal God! who art glorious in the assembly of Thy Saints. For Thy creatures serve Thee, because they acknowledge Thee for their only creator and God. The whole creation praiseth Thee, and Thy Saints bless Thee; because they confess with freedom before the kings and powers of this world, the great name of Thy only-begotten Son: before whom the angels and archangels, the thrones and dominations stand, and with all the troops of the heavenly host, sing the hymn of Thy glory, saying without ceasing:

The Choir sings:

Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord God of hosts! The heavens and the earth are full of Thy glory. Hosanna in the highest! Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest.

Then the Priest says:

*V.* The Lord be with you.

*R.* And with thy spirit.

Let us pray.

We beseech Thee, O holy Lord, almighty Father, eternal God! that Thou wouldst be pleased to bless and sanctify these branches which Thou hast caused to spring from the olive-tree, and which the dove, returning to the ark, brought in its bill; that whoever receiveth it may find protection of soul and body; and that it may prove, O Lord! the remedy of our salvation, and a sacred sign of Thy grace; through our Lord, &c.

*R.* Amen.

Let us pray.

O God! who gatherest what is dispersed and preservest what is gathered: who didst bless the people that carried boughs to meet Jesus; bless also these branches of the palm-tree, and of olive-tree, which Thy servants take with faith, for the honor of Thy name; that into whatever place they may be carried, the inhabitants of that place may obtain Thy blessing; and Thy right hand preserve from all adversity, and protect those that have been redeemed by our Lord Jesus Christ, Thy Son, who liveth and reigneth, &c.

Let us pray.

O God! who by the wonderful order of Thy providence wouldst even in insensible things shew us the manner of our salvation, grant, we beseech Thee, that the devout hearts of Thy faithful may savingly understand the mystical meaning of that ceremony, which the multitude performed, when by direction from heaven, going this day to meet our Redeemer, they strewed under His feet palm and olive-branches—the palms represent His triumph over the prince of death; and the olive-branches proclaim, in same manner, the spreading of a spiritual unction. For that pious multitude knew even then, what was signified by them; that our Redeemer, compassionating the miseries of mankind, was to combat for the life of the whole world with the prince of death, and to triumph over him by His own death. Hence it was, they made use of such emblems, as might declare both the triumph of His victory, and the riches of His mercy. We also, with a firm faith, retaining both the ceremony and its signification, humbly beseech Thee, O holy Lord, almighty Father, eternal God! through the same Lord, Jesus Christ; that we, whom Thou hast made His members, gaining by Him, and in Him, a victory over the empire of death, may deserve to be partakers of His glorious resurrection; who liveth and reigneth with Thee, &c.

Let us pray.

O God! who by an olive-branch didst command the dove to proclaim peace to the world; grant us, we beseech Thee, Thy grace to sanctify by Thy heavenly benediction these branches of the olive and other trees; that they may be serviceable to all Thy people for their salvation; through Christ, our Lord.

*R.* Amen.

Let us pray.

Bless, O Lord! we beseech Thee, these branches of the palm-tree, or olive-tree; and grant, that what Thy people this day corporally perform for the honor of Thy name they may with the greatest devotion spiritually accomplish, by gaining a victory over their enemy, and ardently loving works of mercy; through our Lord, &c.

The Priest sprinkles the Palms with Holy Water, and fumes them with Incense, and says:

*V.* The Lord be with you.

*R.* And with thy spirit.

Let us pray.

O God! who for our salvation didst send into this world Thy Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord, that humbling Himself to our condition He might recall us to Thee: who also, as He was going to Jerusalem to fulfil the scriptures, was met by a multitude of faithful people, with zealous devotion, spreading their garments together with branches of palm-trees in His path; grant, we beseech Thee, that we may prepare Him the way of faith from which, the stone of offense, and the rock of scandal being removed, our actions may flourish with branches of justice, so that we may be able to follow His steps: who liveth and reigneth, &c.

The Palms being blessed, they are distributed by the Priest to the Clergy and to the Laity. The Palms are received kneeling. The receiver kisses the Palm and the Priest's hand. During the distribution the following Antiphons are sung:

*Ant.* The Hebrew children carrying olive-branches met our Lord, crying out, and saying: Hosanna in the highest!

*Another Ant.* The Hebrew children spread their garments in the way, and cried out, saying: Hosanna to the Son of David! blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord.

Then the Priest says:

The Lord be with you.

*R.* And with thy spirit.



Let us pray.

Omnipotent and eternal God! who wouldst have our Lord, Jesus Christ, ride on the colt of an ass, and didst inspire crowds of people to spread their garments, or the branches of trees in His way, and to sing Hosanna in His praise: grant, we beseech Thee, that we may imitate their innocence, and deserve to partake of their merit; through the same Christ, our Lord.

*R.* Amen.

Next follows the Procession. First the Priest puts Incense in the Censer, and the Deacon, turning to the people, says:

Let us go in peace.

*R.* In the name of Christ. Amen.

The Thurifer walks first with the Censer smoking; then the Sub-Deacon, with the Cross, between two Acolytes with their candles burning; next the Clergy in order, and last of all the Priest with the Deacon at his left, all bearing Palms in their hands.

INTROIT OF THE MASS.—Ps. 21.

“O Lord! remove not Thy help to a distance from me, look towards my defense; save me from the lion’s mouth, and my lowness from the horns of the unicorns. O God, my God! look on me, why hast Thou forsaken me? Far from my salvation are the words of my sins. O Lord! remove not, &c.”

These words, in which the suffering Saviour, surrounded by the persecutions and insults of His enemies, sorrowfully prays to His heavenly Father, are taken from one of the most beautiful psalms of David.

PRAYER.

Almighty and everlasting God! who didst vouchsafe to send Thy Son, our Saviour, to take upon Him our flesh, and to suffer death upon the cross, to give mankind an example of humility; mercifully grant that we may both follow the example of His patience, and be made partakers of His resurrection; through the same Jesus Christ, our Lord.

EPISTLE.—Philippians 2: 5-11.

“Brethren! let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus; who being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God; but debased himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men, and in habit found as a man. He humbled himself, becoming obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. For which cause God also hath exalted him, and hath given him a name: which is above every name. That in the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those that are in heaven, on earth, and

under the earth; and that every tongue should confess, that the Lord, Jesus Christ, is in the glory of God, the Father."

In this Epistle the great Apostle directs our attention to the incomprehensible humility and self-denial of the Son of God, who, although equal to His Father in greatness and majesty, humbled Himself until He became like unto the least of men, suffering the most ignominious death of the cross, out of obedience to His heavenly Father, but through this humility entering the glory of heaven, and now worshiped and adored by all created beings. This truth should encourage us to follow our Saviour in His humility, self-denial, and obedience, so that we may be thought worthy to enter into the eternal glory of heaven.

THE PASSION OF OUR LORD.—According to St. Matthew 26, 27.

"At that time, Jesus said to his disciples: You know that after two days shall be the pasch, and the Son of man shall be delivered up to be crucified. Then were gathered together the chief priests, and the ancients of the people into the court of the high priest, who was called Caiphas. And they consulted together, that, by subtilty, they might apprehend Jesus, and put him to death. But they said: Not on the festival day, lest perhaps there should be a tumult among the people. And when Jesus was in Bethania, in the house of Simon the leper, there came to him a woman having an alabaster-box of precious ointment, and poured it on his head, as he was at table. And the disciples seeing it, had indignation, saying: To what purpose is this waste? For this might have been sold for much, and given to the poor. And Jesus knowing it, said to them: Why do you trouble this woman? for she hath wrought a good work upon me. For the poor you have always with you: but me you have not always. For she, in pouring this ointment upon my body, hath done it for my burial. Amen, I say to you, wheresoever this gospel shall be preached in the whole world, that also which she hath done, shall be told for a memory of her. Then went one of the twelve, who was called Judas Iscariot, to the chief priests, and said to them: What will you give me, and I will deliver him unto you? But they appointed him thirty pieces of silver. And from thenceforth he sought opportunity to betray him.

"And on the first day of the azymes, the disciples came to Jesus, saying: Where wilt thou that we prepare for thee to eat the pasch? But Jesus said: Go ye into the city to a certain man, and say to him: The master saith: My time is near at hand, with thee I make the pasch with my disciples. And the disciples did as Jesus appointed to them, and they prepared the pasch. But when it was evening, he sat down with his twelve disciples. And whilst they were eating, he said: Amen I say to you, that one of you is about to betray me. And they being very much troubled, began every one to say: Is it I, Lord? But he answering, said: He that dippeth his hand with me in the dish,

he shall betray me. The Son of man indeed goeth as it is written of him; but wo to that man, by whom the Son of man shall be betrayed: it were better for him, if that man had not been born. And Judas that betrayed him, answering, said: Is it I, Rabbi? he saith to him: Thou hast said it. And whilst they were at supper, Jesus took bread, and blessed and broke, and gave to his disciples, and said: Take ye and eat: This is my body. And taking the chalice he gave thanks: and gave to them, saying: Drink ye all of this. For this is my blood of the new testament, which shall be shed for many unto the remission of sins. And I say to you, I will not drink from henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I shall drink it with you new in the kingdom of my Father. And a hymn being said, they went out unto Mount Olivet.

“Then Jesus saith to them: All you shall be scandalized in me this night. For it is written: I will strike the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock shall be dispersed. But after I shall be risen again, I will go before you into Galilee. And Peter answering, said to him: Although all shall be scandalized in thee, I will never be scandalized. Jesus said to him: Amen I say to thee, that in this night, before the cock crow, thou wilt deny me thrice. Peter saith to him: Yea, though I should die with thee, I will not deny thee. And in like manner said all the disciples. Then Jesus came with them to a country place which is called Gethsemani, and he said to his disciples: Sit you here, till I go yonder and pray. And taking with him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, he began to grow sorrowful and to be sad. Then he saith to them: My soul is sorrowful even unto death; stay you here, and watch with me. And going a little further he fell upon his face, praying, and saying: My Father! if it is possible, let this chalice pass from me. Nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt. And he cometh to his disciples and findeth them asleep; and he saith to Peter: What! could you not watch one hour with me? Watch ye, and pray that ye enter not into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh weak. Again, the second time, he went and prayed, saying, My Father! if this chalice may not pass away but I must drink it, thy will be done. And he cometh again, and findeth them sleeping; for their eyes were heavy. And leaving them, he went away again, and he prayed the third time, saying the self-same word. Then he cometh to his disciples, and saith to them: Sleep ye now, and take your rest: behold the hour is at hand, and the Son of man shall be betrayed into the hands of sinners. Rise, let us go; behold, he is at hand that will betray me.

“As he yet spoke, behold, Judas, one of the twelve, came, and with him a great multitude with swords and clubs, sent from the chief priests and the ancients of the people. And he that betrayed him, gave them a sign, saying: Whomsoever I shall kiss, that is he: hold him fast. And forthwith coming to Jesus, he said: Hail, rabbi! And he kissed him. And Jesus said to him: Friend! whereto art thou come? Then they came up, and laid hands on Jesus



and held him. And behold one of them that were with Jesus stretching forth his hand, drew out his sword; and striking the servant of the high-priest, cut off his ear. Then Jesus saith to him: Put up again thy sword into its place: for all that take the sword shall perish with the sword. Thinkest thou that I can not ask my Father, and he will give me presently more than twelve legions of angels? How then shall the Scriptures be fulfilled, that so it must be done? In that same hour Jesus said to the multitudes: You are come out as it were to a robber, with swords and clubs to apprehend me. I sat daily with you teaching in the temple, and you laid not hands on me. Now all this was done that the Scriptures of the prophets might be fulfilled. Then the disciples all leaving him, fled.

“But they holding Jesus, led him to Caiphas, the high-priest, where the scribes and the ancients were assembled. And Peter followed him afar off even to the court of the high priest’s palace. And going in, he sat with the servants, to see the end. And the chief priests, and whole council sought false witness against Jesus that they might put him to death: And they found not whereas many false witnesses had come in. And last of all there came two false witnesses. And they said: This man said, I am able to destroy the temple of God, and in three days to rebuild it. And the high-priest rising up, said to him: Answerest thou nothing to the things which these witness against thee? But Jesus held his peace. And the high-priest said to him: I adjure thee by the living God, that thou tell us if thou be the Christ, the Son of God. Jesus saith to him: Thou hast said it. Nevertheless I say to you, hereafter you shall see the Son of man, sitting on the right hand of the power of God, and coming in the clouds of heaven. Then the high-priest rent his garments, saying: He hath blasphemed, what further need have we of witnesses? Behold, now you have heard the blasphemy. What think you? But they answering, said: He is guilty of death. Then they spit in his face, and buffeted him, and others struck his face with the palms of their hands, saying: Prophecy unto us, O Christ! who is he that struck thee? But Peter sat without in the court, and there came to him a servant-maid, saying: Thou also wast with Jesus the Galilean. But he denied before them all, saying: I know not what thou sayest. And as he went out of the gate, another maid saw him, and she saith to them that were there: This man also was with Jesus of Nazareth. And again he denied with an oath: I do not know the man. And after a little while they came that stood by, and said to Peter: Surely thou also art one of them: for even thy speech doth discover thee. Then he began to curse and to swear, that he knew not the man. And immediately the cock crew. And Peter remembered the word of Jesus which he had said: Before the cock crow, thou wilt deny me thrice. And going forth, he wept bitterly.

“And when the morning was come, all the chief priests and ancients of the people, took council against Jesus, that they might put him to death. And they

brought him bound, and delivered him to Pontius Pilate, the governor. Then Judas, who betrayed him, seeing that he was condemned, repenting himself, brought back the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and the ancients saying: I have sinned, in betraying innocent blood. But they said: What is that to us? look thou to it. And casting down the pieces of silver in the temple, he departed: and went and hanged himself with a halter. But the chief priests having taken the pieces of silver, said: It is not lawful to put them into the corbona, because it is the price of blood. And after they had consulted together, they bought with them the potter's field, to be a burying-place for strangers. For this cause that field was called Haceldama, that is the field of blood even to this day. Then was fulfilled that which was spoken by Jeremias the prophet, saying: And they took the thirty pieces of silver, the price of him that was prized, whom they prized of the children of Israel. And they gave them unto the potter's field, as the Lord appointed to me. And Jesus stood before the governor, and the governor asked him, saying: Art thou the king of the Jews? Jesus saith to him: Thou sayest it. And when he was accused by the chief priests and ancients, he answered nothing. Then Pilate saith to him: Dost not thou hear how great testimonies they allege against thee? And he answered him not to any word: so that the governor wondered exceedingly.

"Now upon the solemn day the governor was accustomed to release to the people one prisoner, whom they would. And he had then a notorious prisoner that was called Barabbas. They therefore being gathered together, Pilate said: Whom will you that I release to you, Barabbas, or Jesus, that is called Christ? For he knew that for envy they had delivered him. And as he was sitting on the judgment seat, his wife sent to him, saying: Have thou nothing to do with that just man. For I have suffered many things this day in a dream because of him. But the chief priests and ancients persuaded the people, that they should ask Barabbas, and make Jesus away. And the governor answering, said to them: Whether will you of the two to be released unto you? But they said, Barabbas. Pilate saith to them: What shall I do then with Jesus that is called Christ? They say all: Let him be crucified. The governor said to them: Why, what evil hath he done? But they cried out the more, saying: Let him be crucified. And Pilate seeing that he prevailed nothing: but that rather a tumult was made; taking water, washed his hands before the people, saying: I am innocent of the blood of this just man: look you to it. And the whole people answering, said: His blood be upon us, and upon our children. Then he released to them Barabbas, and having scourged Jesus, delivered him to them to be crucified. Then the soldiers of the governor, taking Jesus into the hall, gathered together unto him the whole band. And stripping him, they put a scarlet cloak about him. And plating a crown of thorns, they put it upon his head, and a reed in his right hand. And bowing the knee before him, they mocked him, saying: Hail, king of the Jews! And

spitting upon him, they took the reed, and struck his head. And after they had mocked him, they took off the cloak from him, and put on him his own garments, and led him away to crucify him.

“And going out, they found a man of Cyrene, named Simon; him they forced to take up his cross. And they came to the place that is called Golgotha, which is the place of Calvary. And they gave him wine to drink mingled with gall. And when he had tasted, he would not drink. And after they had crucified him, they divided his garments, casting lots; that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying: They divided my garments among them; and upon my vesture they cast lots. And they sat, and watched him. And they put over his head his cause written: This is Jesus, the King of the Jews. Then were crucified with him two thieves; the one on the right hand, and the other on the left. And they that passed by blasphemed him, wagging their heads, and saying: Vah, thou that destroyest the temple of God, and in three days dost rebuild it, save thy ownself: if thou be the Son of God, come down from the cross. In like manner also, the chief priests with the scribes and ancients, mocking, said: He saved others; himself he cannot save: If he be the king of Israel, let him now come down from the cross, and we will believe him. He trusted in God, let him now deliver him if he will have him: for he said: I am the Son of God. And the self same thing the thieves also, that were crucified with him, reproached him with. Now from the sixth hour there was darkness over all the earth, until the ninth hour. And about the ninth hour, Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying: Eli, Eli, lamma sabacthani? that is, My God! my God! why hast thou forsaken me? And some that stood there and heard, said: This man calleth Elias. And immediately one of them running, took a sponge, and filled it with vinegar; and put it on a reed, and gave him to drink. And the others said: Let be, let us see whether Elias will come to deliver him. And Jesus again crying with a loud voice, yielded up the ghost.

“And behold the veil of the temple was rent in two, from the top even to the bottom, and the earth quaked, and the rocks were rent; and the graves were opened: and many bodies of the saints that had slept arose: and coming out of the tombs after his resurrection, came into the holy city, and appeared to many. Now the centurion, and they that were with him watching Jesus, having seen the earthquake, and the things that were done, were sore afraid, saying: Indeed this was the Son of God. And there were there many women afar off, who had followed Jesus from Galilee, ministering unto him. Among whom was Mary Magdalen, and Mary, the mother of James and Joseph, and the mother of the sons of Zebedee. And when it was evening, there came a certain rich man of Arimathea, named Joseph, who also himself was a disciple of Jesus. He went to Pilate and asked the body of Jesus. Then Pilate com-



manded that the body should be delivered. And Joseph taking the body, wrapped it up in a clean linen cloth. And laid it in his own new monument, which he had hewed out in a rock; and he rolled a great stone to the door of the monument, and went his way. And there was there Mary Magdalene, and the other Mary sitting over against the sepulchre.

“And the next day, which followed the day of the preparation, the chief priests and the Pharisees came together to Pilate, saying: Sir, we have remembered that seducer said, while he was yet alive: After three days I will rise again. Command, therefore, the sepulchre to be guarded until the third day: lest his disciples come and steal him away, and say to the people: He is risen from the dead; and the last error shall be worse than the first. Pilate said to them: You have a guard, go guard it as you know. And they departing, made the sepulchre sure, sealing the stone, and setting guards.”

In conclusion we will give for your instruction the beautiful homily of St. Ambrose on the Gospel, which is sung at the blessing of the palms: “At that time, when Jesus drew nigh to Jerusalem, and was come to Bethphage, unto Mount Olivet; then he sent two disciples, saying to them: Go ye into the village that is over against you, and immediately you will find an ass tied, and a colt with her; loose them, and bring them to me; and if any man shall say any thing to you, say ye that the Lord hath need of them, and forthwith he will let them go. Now all this was done, that the word might be fulfilled, which was spoken by the prophet, saying: Tell ye the daughter of Sion, behold thy king cometh to thee, meek, and sitting upon an ass, and a colt, the foal of her that is used to the yoke. And the disciples going, did as Jesus commanded them. And they brought the ass and the colt, and laid their garments upon them, and made him sit thereon. And a very great multitude spread their garments in the way; and others cut down boughs from the trees, and strewed them in the way; and the multitude that went before, and that followed, cried, saying: Hosanna to the Son of David! blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord.”

This great Doctor of the Church says: “How beautifully does the Lord ascend into the temple, wishing, after having forsaken the Jews, to dwell in the hearts of the Gentiles! For that is the true temple where God is adored not in the letter, but in the spirit. This is the temple of God, built upon the power of faith, and not upon dead masses of stones. The Lord forsakes the Jews, who hated Him, and chooses the Gentiles to love Him. For this reason He went to the garden of Olives, there to plant new olive-branches, full of sublime strength, whose root is the new Jerusalem. On this mountain dwells the heavenly Gardener, so that all the branches planted in the house of God could say: ‘I am as a fruitful olive-tree in the house of God.’ (Ps. 51: 10.)

“Christ Himself is this mountain; for who but He could bring forth such

olive-trees, not loaded with an abundance of sweet fruits, but fertilizing the nations by the fullness of the spirit? It is He through whom, and to whom we ascend; He is the way which is opened to us, He is the door at which those who enter must knock, and whom the Blessed adore."

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## GREEN, OR MAUNDY THURSDAY.

THE principal solemnity of Holy Week commences with Holy Thursday. By reason of the great mysteries accomplished on this day, the Christians of the East called it the day of THE GREAT MYSTERIES. In the language of the Church it is called CENA DOMINI—the day of the Lord's Supper—because on that day Christ ate the last supper with His disciples, on which occasion the great mystery of His love, the unbloody sacrifice of the new law and the most Holy Sacrament of the Altar was instituted by Him. On Holy Thursday commenced the Passion of Christ, and in the ceremonies of to-day, as in those of Palm-Sunday, joy and grief alternate; the Church expresses her JOY at the institution of the most Blessed Eucharist, and at the same time her SORROW at the sufferings of her beloved Bridegroom. This mingling of joy and grief is exhibited during the celebration of the Mass, where instead of the purple vestment—signifying sorrow—white ones are used—signifying joy—and the "Gloria in Excelsis" is also sung, accompanied by the ringing of the bells. But immediately after the Gloria, the organ and the bells are silent (and continue so until the "Gloria" is intoned at the Mass of Holy Saturday), indicating thereby the grief of the Church over the passion of the Lord.

In regard to the name "Green Thursday" its origin cannot be positively ascertained. According to some writers it refers to Christ, as the true Vine, and according to others it refers to the spring, when vegetation commences, when the fields and gardens begin to look green; and again it is said by others to refer to the green herbs, which, according to the express precepts of the Lord, should be consumed together with the paschal lamb, which custom was undoubtedly observed by our Lord and His disciples at the last supper.

The name Maundy-Thursday was probably taken either from the maunds, or hand-baskets, in which the first-fruits or offerings of the season were carried, or, as others suppose, from the Latin "dies mandati" (the day of command,) on which our Saviour gave his great commandment, that we should love one another.

In the early time of Christianity divine service commenced on Holy Thursday, and on the two following holy days, at midnight, when passages from the Lamentations of Jeremias the prophet were sung; but now they take place

early in the evening. During these night-services all the candles in the Church were lighted; but after the chanting of certain lessons all were extinguished, with the exception of one. This one, which represents the light of the world, Jesus Christ, is only hidden for a time under the altar, and is afterwards brought out again. On account of the darkness pervading the sanctuary, this part of the ceremony is called "tenebræ." The gradual extinction of the candles signifies how the prophets, one after the other, and finally Christ Himself, had been put to death by the Jews, so that this wicked race was at last left in the darkness of unbelief; it signifies, also, how in His sufferings the Saviour was deserted by His apostles one after the other.

The noise made at the end of the "tenebræ" represents the confusion of nature for the loss of its author, at whose death the earth trembled, the rocks were rent, the graves opened, and the veil of the temple was torn from the top to the bottom.

In former times the Bishop on Holy Thursday said three masses; the first early in the morning, for penitents, who were again received into the Church: the second for the blessing of the holy oils, and the third was the proper Mass for the day, in honor of the institution of the holy Eucharist. The last Mass was celebrated with the utmost solemnity. It commenced in the early times of the Church at about three o'clock in the afternoon. Priests, clerics and faithful attended, and all without exception received Holy Communion under the appearance of bread alone. He who did not receive Holy Communion on this day, was looked upon as an apostate, and incurred the censure of the Church. And even to this day the holy sacrifice of the Mass is offered up by one priest only in every church, while the other priests receive Holy Communion under one form and appearance, in commemoration of Christ having on this day for the first time offered up the unbloody sacrifice of the new law.

INTROIT OF THE MASS.—Gal. 6: 14.

"But it behoves us to glory in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, in whom is our salvation, life, and resurrection; by whom we are saved and delivered. May God have mercy upon us, and bless us; may he cause the light of his countenance to shine upon us, and may he have mercy on us. But it behoves."

At the beginning of the Passion of Christ, the Church very appropriately refers to the salutary effects resulting from His death on the Cross; and admonishes us with the great Apostle, to glory only in the Cross of our Redeemer, and on account of His merits to implore the heavenly Father for mercy and forgiveness.

PRAYER.

O God, from whom Judas received the punishment of his guilt, and the good thief the reward of his confession, grant us the effect of Thy mercy, that



as our Lord Jesus Christ, in his Passion, gave to each different retribution according to their deserts, so he would take from us our old errors, and grant us the grace of his resurrection. Who lives and reigns.

EPISTLE.—1 Cor. 11 : 20-32.

“Brethren : When you come together herefore, into one place, it is not now to eat the Lord’s supper. For every one taketh before his own supper to eat. And one indeed is hungry, and another is drunk. What, have you not houses to eat, and to drink in ? or despise ye the Church of God, and put them to shame that have not ? What shall I say to you ? Do I praise you ? In this I praise you not. For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered to you : that the Lord Jesus, the same night in which he was betrayed, took bread, and giving thanks, broke, and said : Take ye, and eat : this is my body which shall be delivered for you : this do for the commemoration of me. In like manner also the chalice, after he had supped, saying : This chalice is the new testament in my blood : this do ye, as often as you shall drink, for the commemoration of me. For as often as you shall eat this bread, and drink the chalice, you shall shew the death of the Lord, until he come. Wherefore whosoever shall eat this bread, or drink the chalice of the Lord unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and of the blood of the Lord. But let a man prove himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of the chalice. For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh judgment to himself, not discerning the body of the Lord. Therefore are there many infirm and weak among you, and many sleep. But if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged. But whilst we are judged, we are chastised by the Lord, that we be not condemned with this world.”

In this Epistle, the Apostle censured some abuses, which were practised by the Corinthians at the feast of the Lord’s Supper. In the time of the Apostles, the faithful celebrated the feast of the Lord’s Supper in the same manner in which Christ ate with His disciples before he instituted the holy Sacrament of the Altar. In coming to the feast, each one brought with him, according to his circumstances, some refreshments, which were divided among all without distinction, so that these feasts were called “love-feasts.”

St. Paul does not condemn these love-feasts, but only the manner in which they were conducted. At Corinth, where the spirit of Christian love seemed to have disappeared, it became the custom for the rich to consume among themselves whatever they had brought with them, giving nothing to the poor who were thus left with nothing to eat. Such gluttony and want of charity on the part of the rich was certainly an unworthy preparation for receiving the most holy Sacrament.

The Apostle then describes the institution of the most holy Eucharist in the same words used by the Evangelist, and earnestly invites us to prepare our-

selves worthily for the proper reception of this mystery, pointing at the same time to the terrible consequences resulting from an unworthy communion.

GOSPEL.—John 13 : 1-15.

“Before the festival day of the pasch, Jesus knowing that his hour was come, that he should pass out of this world to the Father, having loved his own, who were in the world, he loved them unto the end. And when supper was done, the devil having now put into the heart of Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon, to betray him : knowing that the Father had given him all things into his hands, and that he came from God, and goeth to God : he riseth from supper, and layeth aside his garments, and having taken a towel, girded himself. After that he poureth water into a basin, and began to wash the feet of the disciples, and to wipe them with the towel wherewith he was girded. He cometh therefore to Simon Peter. And Peter saith to him : Lord, dost thou wash my feet ? Jesus answered, and said to him : What I do, thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter. Peter saith to him : Thou shalt never wash my feet. Jesus answered him : If I wash thee not, thou shalt have no part with me. Simon Peter saith to him : Lord, not only my feet, but also my hands and my head. Jesus saith to him : He that is washed, needeth not but to wash his feet, but is clean wholly. And you are clean, but not all. For he knew who he was that would betray him ; therefore he said : You are not all clean. Then after he had washed their feet, and taken his garments, having sat down again, he said to them : Know you what I have done to you ? You call me Master, and Lord : and you say well, for so I am. If I, then, being your Lord and Master, have washed your feet ; you also ought to wash one another's feet ; for I have given you an example, that as I have done to you, so you do also.”

In this Gospel we are reminded of the beautiful example of humility which our Saviour gave to His disciples (before instituting the most holy Sacrament of the Altar) by washing their feet, a ceremony always performed by slaves, as it was the custom for every host to have the feet of his guests washed by his servants. But the Saviour, who debased Himself, taking the form of a servant (Phil. 2 : 7), rendered this humble service to His disciples, and even to the wicked Judas, in order to impress upon them the obligation of being kind to all men, even if it should put them to some trouble to show their good will.

The washing of the feet had still another meaning ; it was an admonition to the Apostles that they should purify themselves from even the least stain of sin, in order to receive worthily the Holy Communion, which their Lord and Master was about to give them. They were already cleansed from original and other sins by baptism, as is evident from the words of Jesus, spoken to Peter : “He that is washed, needeth not but to wash his feet, but is clean wholly.” (John 13 : 10.)

St. Bernard very justly remarks: "He is washed who is free from grievous sin, whose head, that is mind, and whose hands, that is life, are pure; but the feet, signifying the inclinations of the soul, can not, by reason of walking in the dust, be kept so clean, that the soul may not sometimes be given to vanity, pleasure, or curiosity. In many things we all sin; but none should on that account consider it unimportant, for it is impossible to be saved, if we deliberately commit even trifling sins; impossible to be freed from them, unless through Christ."

On Holy Thursday, a place is prepared in some chapel or altar of the church, appropriately adorned with flowers and lights, where the chalice with the consecrated Host is kept until the next day, Good Friday, on which day the Priest receives the Host, consecrated at the Mass of the previous day.

At the end of the Mass the Priest carries the Blessed Sacrament in solemn procession to the sacred place for the adoration of the faithful. During the procession the beautiful hymn, "Pange Lingua," is sung.

The Vespers then are chanted, after which the altars are divested of their covering and other ornaments, to indicate how Christ was deprived of His beauty during the Passion, and even stripped of His garments. At the same time the Choir chants the 21st Psalm, in which is expressed the sufferings of Christ:

"O God, my God! look upon me: why hast thou forsaken me? Far from my salvation are the words of my sins.

"O my God! I shall cry by day, and thou wilt not hear: and by night, and it shall not be reputed as folly in me.

"But thou dwellest in the holy place, the praise of Israel.

"In thee have our fathers hoped; they have hoped, and thou hast delivered them.

"They cried to thee, and they were saved: they trusted in thee, and were not confounded.

"But I am a worm, and no man: the reproach of men, and the outcast of the people.

"All they that saw me have laughed me to scorn: they have spoken with the lips, and wagged the head.

"He hoped in the Lord, let him deliver him: let him save him, seeing he delighteth in him.

"For thou art he that hast drawn me out of the womb: my hope from the breasts of my mother. I was cast upon thee from the womb.

"From my mother's womb thou art my God, depart not from me.

"For tribulation is very near: for there is none to help me.

"Many calves have surrounded me: fat bulls have besieged me.

"They have opened their mouths against me, as a lion ravening and roaring.



"I am poured out like water ; and all my bones are scattered.

"My heart is become like wax melting in the midst of my bowels.

"My strength was dried up like a potsherd, and my tongue hath cleaved to my jaws : and thou hast brought me down into the dust of death.

"For many dogs have encompassed me ; the council of the malignant hath besieged me.

"They have dug my hands and my feet. They have numbered all my bones.

"And they have looked and stared upon me. They parted my garments amongst them ; and upon my vesture they cast lots.

"But thou, O Lord, remove not thy help from me : look towards my defence.

"Deliver, O God, my soul from the sword ; and my only one from the hand of the dog.

"Save me from the lion's mouth, and my lowness from the horns of unicorns.

"I will declare thy name to my brethren : in the midst of the Church will I praise thee.

"Ye that fear the Lord praise him : all ye the seed of Jacob glorify him.

"Let all the seed of Israel fear him : because he hath not slighted nor despised the supplication of the poor man.

"Neither hath he turned away his face from me : and when I cried to him he heard me.

"With thee is my praise in a great church : I will pay my vows in the sight of them that fear him.

"The poor shall eat and shall be filled ; and they shall praise the Lord, that seek him : their hearts shall live for ever and ever.

"All the ends of the earth shall remember, and shall be converted to the Lord :

"And all the kindreds of the Gentiles shall adore in his sight.

"For the kingdom is the Lord's ; and he shall have dominion over the nations.

"All the fat ones of the earth have eaten and have adored : all they that go down to the earth shall fall before him.

"And to him my soul shall live : and my seed shall serve him.

"There shall be declared to the Lord a generation to come : and the heavens shall show forth his justice to a people that shall be born, which the Lord hath made.

"*Ant.* They parted my garments amongst them ; and upon my vesture they cast lots.

"*Ant.* Unjust witnesses have risen up against me, and iniquity hath lied to itself."

On this day, in Cathedral Churches, the holy oils are blessed: the oil of the Catechumens, the Oil of Unction for the sick, and Holy Chrism.

In the morning due preparation having been made before by the Sacristan, the Bishop comes into the Church, where he vests for Mass with all his pontifical attire, rich and of a white color. The attendants of the Bishop also vest, and besides them, twelve Priests, seven Deacons, seven Subdeacons, Acolytes, and others, all in the vestures proper to their several orders, of a white color. Which done, a procession is formed to the altar. All taking their places in the Choir, the Bishop, having reached the front of the altar, says the *Confiteor*; and proceeds with the Mass, until the words in the Canon, *Per quem hæc omnia, Domine, semper bona creas, &c.*

Before the Bishop pronounces these words, having made a genuflexion to the Blessed Sacrament already consecrated upon the Altar, he retires to the Epistle side of the Altar, where he purifies his fingers over an empty chalice, and wipes them with the purifier. Then a second time genuflecting to the Blessed Sacrament, he descends the first step of the Altar, and there receiving his mitre, goes to a seat prepared for him in the Presbytery, over against the Altar, and there sits, with his face towards the Altar, at a table previously set there, with the twelve Priests, and others in their respective vestments. Then the Priest and others standing round, the Archdeacon at the side of the Bishop, says with a loud voice, "*Oleum Infirmarum*," i. e. "the Oil for the Sick;" which one of the Subdeacons accompanied by two Acolytes, proceeds to bring from the Sacristy (where it has been previously got in readiness,) and gives it into the hands of the Archdeacon, saying distinctly, "*Oleum Infirmarum*."

The Archdeacon presents it to the Bishop to be blessed, saying the same words, and placing it on the table. The Bishop rising, with his mitre, says in a low voice:

#### THE BLESSING OF THE OIL FOR THE SICK.

I exorcise and adjure Thee, O unclean spirit, and every assault and illusion of Satan, in the name of the Father ✠, and of the Son ✠, and of the Holy ✠ Ghost; to depart from this Oil, that it may be made an unction of grace to strengthen the Temple of the living God; that in it the Holy Ghost may dwell, through the name of God the Father Almighty, and through the name of His most dearly beloved Son our Lord Jesus Christ, who shall come to judge the quick and the dead, and the world by fire. Amen.

Then putting off his mitre, he blesses the Oil, saying in the same tone:

V. The Lord be with you.

R. And with thy spirit.

Let us pray.

Send forth, we beseech Thee, O Lord, Thy Holy Ghost the paraclete from Heaven upon this fatness of the olive, which thou hast vouchsafed to bring forth out of a green tree, for the strengthening and refreshing of soul and body: that by Thy grace and benedic✠tion whosoever is anointed with this oil of heavenly virtue may receive protection of soul and body, and deliverance from all pains, all infirmities, and all ills of soul and body; whereby Thou didst anoint Priests, Kings, Prophets, and Martyrs: grant, O Lord, it may be Thy true and perfect Chrism, blessed by Thee, dwelling in our hearts; in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

After this, the Oil is carried back to the Sacristy, and kept most carefully. Then the Bishop resuming his mitre, sits, washes his hands, rises, and with his mitre goes accompanied by his attendants to the step of the Altar, where putting off his mitre, he genuflects, goes up to the Altar, and proceeds with the Mass, until the Communion, which the Bishop receives only. The Deacon then puts the consecrated Host, to be reserved for the morrow, into a chalice, and reverently places it in the midst of the Altar. Then the Bishop communicates the Deacon and Subdeacon, and the rest of the Clergy: and after receiving the ablutions, he genuflects to the Blessed Sacrament upon the Altar, and returning sits as before; the attendants and others standing.

Then the Archdeacon standing near the Bishop, says with a loud voice: "*Oleum ad sanctum Chrism,*" i. e. the Oil for the holy Chrism. And after, in the same tone, he adds, "*Oleum Catechumenorum.*"

After which, a thurible being presented to the Bishop, he puts incense into it, and blesses it after the accustomed manner. Then the Priests, Deacons, and Subdeacons go in procession to the Sacristy to fetch with all solemnity the Oil of Chrism and the Oil of Catechumens, which are brought in, carried in the procession by two Deacons, preceded by a Subdeacon carrying a vessel of balsam, and followed by the Priests, Deacons, and Subdeacons.

As the procession moves from the Sacristy, two Cantors chant the verses following:

#### CONSECRATION OF THE HOLY CHRISM.

Hear our hymn, Redeemer Lord: Thee we praise with one accord.

The Choir repeat the same, and the Cantors then say:

Hear us, Judge of dead and living, Hope of mortals, hear us singing:  
Hear us, tribute to Thee from the peaceful olive bringing.

*Choir.* Hear our hymn.

*Cantors.* Fruit of light the tree did yield, that gave this hallowed store:  
worshipping the world's Redeemer, this we offer and adore.

*Choir.* Hear our hymn.

*Cantors.* There before the altar standing prays the mitred pontiff lowly:  
Duly he performs the rite, to bless the Chrism holy.

*Choir.* Hear our hymn.

*Cantors.* Consecrate Thou Christ eternal, King of Heaven our home.  
This our Chrism a living Seal, against the powers of doom.

*Choir.* Hear our hymn.

When all have reached their places in the Choir, the Deacon who carries the Oil of Chrism comes before the Bishop; and the Archdeacon receiving it from him, places it, covered with a white cloth, on the table before the Bishop. Then the Subdeacon, carrying the vessel with balsam, gives it to the Archdeacon, who places it in like manner upon the table. The Bishop then rises, puts off his mitre, and first blesses the balsam, saying:

V. The Lord be with you.

R. And with thy spirit.

Let us pray.

O God, who art the author and giver of heavenly mysteries, and of all graces, we beseech Thee to hear our prayers: grant that these balmy tears of



sapless wood (which exuding from a fruitful branch make fat our souls with sacerdotal unction) may be made acceptable to Thee in Thy Sacraments, and be graciously sancti✝fied by Thy blessing, through our Lord Jesus Christ, Thy Son; who liveth and reigneth with Thee, in the unity of the Holy Ghost, God, world without end.

*R. Amen.*

Let us pray.

O Lord, the maker of all creatures, who by Thy servant Moses didst command, a mixture being made of sweet spices, the hallowing of anointing oil: we humbly beseech Thy clemency, that upon this oil, which the root of a tree hath yielded, Thou wouldst bestow the graces of Thy Spirit, and the fullness of conse✝cration: make it unto us, O Lord, a savor of faith and gladness, an everlasting Chrism of sacerdotal unction; make it worthy of the sign of Thy heavenly banner; that whosoever being born again by holy Baptism shall have been anointed with this oil, may receive the fullest benediction, both of body and soul, and may be everlastingly fulfilled with the blessed grace of faith, through our Lord Jesus Christ, Thy Son, who liveth and reigneth with Thee in the unity of the Holy Ghost, God, world without end.

*R. Amen.*

Then taking his mitre, the Bishop still standing, mixes in a paten balsam with a little of the oil from the Ampulla, containing the Chrism, saying:

Let us beseech our Lord God Almighty, (who hath joined together the infinite Godhead of His only-begotten and co-eternal Son inseparably unto a true and very humanity, and with the grace of the Holy Ghost co-operating, hath anointed Him with the oil of gladness above his fellows, in order that man, undone by the fraud and malice of the devil, consisting of a two-fold, yet singular nature, might be restored to the everlasting inheritance from which he had fallen;) that he will be pleased to ✝ bless these creatures of oil, of two different natures, with the full blessing of the holy Trinity, and in blessing to sanc✝tify them, and grant that being commingled together they may become one; and that whatsoever shall be outwardly anointed therewith, may be so inwardly anointed, that being freed from all soil of bodily matter, he may rejoice in being made partaker of the kingdom of Heaven, through the same our Lord Jesus Christ His Son, who liveth and reigneth with him in the unity of the Holy Ghost, God, world without end.

*R. Amen.*

After which the Bishop sits, with his mitre still on, and breathes thrice in the form of a cross, over the Chrism.

Then the twelve Priests in order bowing lowly to the B. Sacrament on the Altar, and to the Bishop, approach the table, and each in turn breathes, as the Bishop had done, over the Chrism. Then

lowly bowing, as before, they return to their places. Which done, the Bishop standing, with his mitre, pronounces at once the Exorcism of the Chrism, saying—

I exorcise thee, O creature of oil, by God the Father Almighty, who hath made heaven and earth, and all that therein is, that all the power of the enemy, all the host of Satan, and all the wiles and illusions of the devil may be expelled, and vanish from thee; that thou mayest be, to all who shall be anointed with thee, for their adoption as sons through the Holy Ghost; in the name of God the Fa-~~ther~~ Almighty, and of Jesus-~~Christ~~ his Son, our Lord, who liveth and reigneth one God, in the unity of the same Holy-~~Spirit~~.

Then putting off his mitre, and extending his hands before his breast, he says the Preface:—

World without end.

*R.* Amen.

*V.* The Lord be with you.

*R.* And with thy spirit.

*V.* Lift up your hearts.

*R.* We lift them up unto the Lord.

*V.* Let us give thanks unto our Lord God.

*R.* It is meet and right so to do.

It is very meet, right, and our bounden duty, that we should at all times, and in all places, give thanks unto Thee, Holy Father, Almighty, everlasting God. Who in the beginning among other blessings of Thy bounty, didst command the earth to bring forth trees yielding fruit, and that among these the olive, yielding this fatness of oil should grow, whose fruit should serve to holy Chrism. For David also, foreknowing by prophetic spirit the sacraments of thy grace, sang of oil to make man of a cheerful countenance; and when of old the crimes of the world were punished by the flood of waters, a dove declaring the image of the future blessing by an olive branch, announced the return of peace to the earth. Which has been shewn by the manifest effects of grace, in these last days, wherein the waters of Baptism washing away all guilt of sin, this unction of oil maketh us of a cheerful and glad countenance. Then to Moses also Thy servant thou didst command, that he should ordain Aaron his brother first washed with water, priest by affusion of this oil. Hereunto was added higher honor, when Thy Son, our Lord Jesus Christ had demanded to be baptized of John in the waters of Jordan: that the Holy Ghost descending in the likeness of a dove upon Thine only-begotten, in whom Thou didst, by the testimony of Thy voice which followed, declare Thyself well pleased, and most manifestly prove this to be that of which the prophet David had sung, that he should be anointed with the oil of gladness above his fellows. We therefore pray thee, O Lord, Holy Father, Almighty, everlasting God, through the same Jesus Christ, our Lord, that Thou wouldst vouchsafe to sanc-~~tify~~ with Thy bless-~~ing~~ this creature of oil, and to infuse into the virtue of Thy Holy-~~Spirit~~, with the power

of Christ Thy Son co-operating, from whose holy name it has received the name of Chrism, with which Thou hast anointed Thy kings, priests, and martyrs; that to all who shall be renewed in the spiritual laver of baptism, Thou wouldst confirm this Chrism for a sacrament of perfect health and life, that by the infusion of sanctifying grace, and the destruction of our original corruption, each one as an holy temple may breathe the fragrance of an holy and acceptable life; that according to the sacrament of Thy institution, being anointed to the dignity of kings and priests and prophets, they may be clad with the robe of the undying gift, that it may be to all who shall be born again of water and the Holy Ghost, the Chrism of salvation, and may make them partakers of eternal life and heirs together of celestial glory.

(Then in a lower tone.)

Through the same Jesus Christ, Thy Son our Lord who with Thee liveth and reigneth in the unity of the same Holy Spirit, one God, world without end.

*R. Amen.*

The Preface being ended, the Bishop mingles the balsam and oil, mixed on the paten, with the holy Chrism in the Ampulla, saying:

Let this mixture of oils be to all anointed therewith a means of grace, and a defence unto salvation, world without end.

*R. Amen.*

The Deacon then removes the veil, which hitherto covered the Ampulla, and the Bishop, bowing his head, salutes the Chrism, saying:

Hail! Holy Chrism.

This he does a second and a third time, saying it louder each time; and after saying it the third time, he kisses the lip of the Ampulla. Afterwards the twelve Priests in order make the same salutation, thrice repeating:

Hail! Holy Chrism.

And having kissed the lip of the Ampulla, return to their places. Presently the Deacon approaches with the other Ampulla, containing the Oil of Catechumens, which he presents to the Archdeacon, who places it on the table before the Bishop. The Bishop and the twelve Priests breathe over it, as before was done in the case of the Ampulla of Chrism. Which done, the Bishop rises, and with his mitre at once pronounces in a low tone the Exorcism of the Oil of Catechumens, saying:

#### THE BLESSING OF THE OIL OF CATECHUMENS.

I exorcise thee, O creature of oil, in the name of God the Father Almighty, and in the name of Jesus Christ, and of the Holy Ghost, that by this invocation of the undivided Trinity, in unity of operation, and of Godhead, all the most wicked powers of the enemy, all the inveterate malice of the devil,



every violent assault, every hidden and dark illusion may be rooted out, and chased away, and dispelled from thee; that thou mayest be hallowed to the use of holy sacraments for the adoption both of flesh and spirit to those who shall be anointed with thee, for the forgiveness of all sins: that their bodies may be sanctified to receive all spiritual grace, through the same our Lord Jesus Christ, who shall come to judge the quick and the dead, and the world by fire.

*R.* Amen.

Then the Bishop, putting off his mitre, blesses the Oil of Catechumens, saying:

*V.* The Lord be with you.

*R.* And with thy spirit.

Let us pray.

O God, the giver of all spiritual growth and advancement, who by the power of the Holy Ghost dost strengthen the first beginnings of weak minds, we beseech Thee, O Lord, that Thou wouldst vouchsafe Thy blessing upon this oil, and to all who come to the blessed laver of regeneration, wouldst give by the use of this anointing oil, absolution of mind and body: that if any stains have sunk into them by the work of the enemy, at the touch of this hallowed oil they may be done away; that there be no place for spiritual wickedness, no occasion given to relapsing virtue, no power of concealment left to lurking sins. But to Thy servants, coming to the faith, and to be cleansed by the grace of Thy Holy Spirit, let the preparation of this unction be availing towards the salvation which they will receive in the sacrament of baptism by the birth of a heavenly regeneration, through our Lord Jesus Christ, Thy Son, who shall come to judge the quick and the dead, and the world by fire.

*R.* Amen.

Then the Bishop and the twelve Priests, in order, reverently salute the Oil of Catechumens, saying thrice:

Hail! Holy Oil.

And when they have done this the third time, they kiss the mouth of the Ampulla, as before was directed for the Chrism. After this, the two Ampullæ are carried by the two Deacons back to the Sacristy, in the same form and order as they were brought, in procession; the two Cantors chanting the following verses:

That by this most sacred unction, either sex may be renewed,  
And our wounded glory rescued through the Spirit's plenitude.

*Ch.* Hear our hymn.

*Cant.* By this fountain's hallowed waters may the soul be cleansed from sin,  
And the brows with oil anointed heavenly graces gain within.

*Ch.* Hear our hymn.

*Cant.* Son of the Eternal Father, virgin-born, afford us light,  
Who receive this holy unction ; save us from death's gloomy night.

*Ch.* Hear our hymn.

*Cant.* May this day of festal gladness, keep his holy joys in store,  
Dignified with joyful praises, blooming now and evermore.

*Ch.* Hear our hymn.

Meanwhile, the Bishop, sitting with his mitre, washes his hands, then returns to the Altar and proceeds with the Mass as in the Missal.

## GOOD FRIDAY.

THIS day is called by the Church Parascève, that is, preparation, because on that day the Jews prepared themselves for the great Sabbath in Easter-week. On this day the Catholic Church commemorates the death of Christ in silent grief and sorrow. As at the death of our Saviour all nature was convulsed—the sun became darkened, the earth quaked, and the rocks were rent ;—in the same manner does the Catholic Church on this day grieve over the death of her heavenly Bridegroom. In all her services black vestments are used as a sign of mourning, and it is the will of the Church that all the faithful should join in her sorrow. The fast is therefore kept very strictly on Good Friday, and all the ceremonies of the day are calculated to remind the faithful of the Passion and death of the Saviour, inciting them to a sincere and sorrowful meditation on this, the greatest proof of the love of Christ for mankind.

On this day, the unbloody sacrifice of the Mass is not offered up, because on Good Friday the Son of God Himself consummated the great and bloody sacrifice upon the cross. The services of to-day signify the funeral obsequies of the Saviour. No offertory is said, nor does the consecration take place ; the Priest consumes the Host consecrated on the previous day, thereby representing the death of our Saviour.

The services of to-day commence with a lesson, taken from the prophet Osee 6: 1-6: "Thus saith the Lord: In their affliction they will rise early to me: Come, and let us return to the Lord: For he hath taken us, and he will heal us; he will strike, and he will cure us. He will revive us after two days: on the third day he will raise us up; and we shall live in his sight. We shall know and we shall follow on, that we may know the Lord. His going forth is prepared as the morning light: and he will come to us as the early and the latter rain to the earth. What shall I do to thee, O Ephraim? what shall I do to thee, O Juda? your mercy is as a morning cloud, and as the dew that goeth away in the morning.

For this reason have I hewed them by the prophets: I have slain them by the words of my mouth: and thy judgments shall go forth as the light. For I desired mercy, and not sacrifice; and the knowledge of God more than holocausts."

This prophecy, speaking of the deliverance of the people from bondage, refers in a higher sense to the redemption of mankind through Christ; at the same time it also mentions the resurrection of the Lord on the third day of His death.

Then follows a lesson, taken from Exodus 12: 1-11: "And the Lord said to Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt: This month shall be to you the beginning of months: it shall be the first in the months of the year. Speak ye to the whole assembly of the children of Israel, and say to them: On the tenth day of this month let every man take a lamb by their families and houses. But if the number be less than may suffice to eat the lamb, he shall take unto him his neighbor that joineth to his house, according to the number of souls which may be enough to eat the lamb. And it shall be a lamb without blemish, a male, of one year: according to which rite also you shall take a kid. And you shall keep it until the fourteenth day of this month: and the whole multitude of the children of Israel shall sacrifice it in the evening. And they shall take of the blood thereof, and put it upon both the side-posts, and on the upper door-posts of the houses, wherein they shall eat it. And they shall eat the flesh that night roasted at the fire, and unleavened bread with wild lettuce. You shall not eat thereof any thing raw, nor boiled in water, but only roasted at the fire: you shall eat the head with the feet and entrails thereof. Neither shall there remain any thing of it until morning. If there be any thing left, you shall burn it with fire. And thus you shall eat it: you shall gird your reins, and you shall have shoes on your feet, holding staves in your hands; and you shall eat in haste: for it is the Phase (that is, the Passage) of the Lord."

Not without significance does the Catholic Church place before us the lesson of to-day; in it we are told that God Himself gave to the Jews regulations as to the manner in which they should kill and eat the paschal lamb, before their Exodus from Egypt (and afterwards on the Pass-over or Pasch, instituted in commemoration of it.) This lamb was the figure of the Saviour; for as the children of Israel were saved by the blood of the lamb from the death by which the first-born of Egypt perished, so should mankind be delivered from a worse death by the blood of Christ, who, as the true Paschal Lamb, was sacrificed upon the cross. And as the paschal lamb served to nourish the Jews in their approaching Exodus from Egypt into the land of promise, so should the blessed body and blood of Christ, the true Paschal Lamb, nourish the faithful in their pilgrimage through this life into the land of promise—heaven.

After the above lessons the Passion of Our Lord Jesus Christ is chanted, according to St. John 18, 19:



“When Jesus had said these things, he went forth with his disciples over the brook Cedron, where there was a garden, into which he entered with his disciples. Now Judas also, who betrayed him, knew the place: because Jesus had often resorted thither together with his disciples. Judas, therefore, having received a band of *men*, and servants, from the chief priests and the Pharisees, cometh thither with lanterns and torches and weapons. Jesus, therefore, knowing all things that were to come upon him, went forward, and said to them: Whom seek ye? They answered him: Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus saith to them: I am he. And Judas, also, who betrayed him stood with them. As soon then as he had said to them: I am he: they went backward, and fell to the ground. Again therefore he asked them: Whom seek ye? And they said: Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus answered, I have told you, that I am he: if, therefore, you seek me, let those go their way: That the word might be fulfilled which he said: Of them whom thou hast given me, I have not lost any one. Then Simon Peter, having a sword, drew it; and struck the servant of the high priest; and cut off his right ear. And the name of the servant was Malchus. Then Jesus said to Peter: Put up thy sword into the scabbard. The chalice which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it? Then the band, and the tribune, and the servants of the Jews, took Jesus, and bound him: and they led him away to Annas first; for he was father-in-law to Caiphas, who was the high priest of that year. Now Caiphas was he, who had given the counsel to the Jews, that it was expedient that one man should die for the people. And Simon Peter followed Jesus; and so did another disciple. And that disciple was known to the high priest, and went in with Jesus into the court of the high priest. But Peter stood at the door without. Then the other disciple who was known to the high priest, went out, and spoke to the portress, and brought in Peter. And the maid that was portress said to Peter: Art not thou also one of this man's disciples? He saith: I am not. Now the servants and officers stood at a fire of coals, because it was cold, and warmed themselves: and with them was Peter also standing, and warmed himself. The high priest then asked Jesus of his disciples, and of his doctrine. Jesus answered him: I have spoken openly to the world: I have always taught in the synagogue, and in the temple, whither all the Jews resort: and in private I have spoken nothing. Why askest thou me? ask them who have heard what I have spoken to them: behold, they know what things I have said. And when he had said these things, one of the officers standing by gave Jesus a blow, saying: Answerest thou the high priest so? Jesus answered him: If I have spoken ill, give testimony of the evil: but if well, why strikest thou me? And Annas sent him bound to Caiphas the high priest. And Simon Peter was standing, and warming himself. They said, therefore, to him: Art not thou also one of his disciples? He denied it, and said: I am not. One of the servants of the high priest, a kinsman to him whose ear

Peter cut off, saith to him: Did not I see thee in the garden with him? Then Peter again denied: and immediately the cock crew. Then they led Jesus from Caiphas to the governor's hall. And it was morning: and they went not into the hall, that they might not be defiled, but that they might eat the pasch. Pilate, therefore, went out to them, and said: What accusation bring you against this man? They answered, and said to him: If he were not a malefactor, we would not have delivered him up to thee. Pilate then said to them: Take him you, and judge him according to your law. The Jews therefore said to him: It is not lawful for us to put any one to death: That the word of Jesus might be fulfilled, which he said, signifying what death he should die. Pilate, therefore, went into the hall again, and called Jesus, and said to him: Art thou the king of the Jews? Jesus answered: Sayest thou this thing of thyself, or have others told it thee of me? Pilate answered: Am I a Jew? Thy nation and the chief priests have delivered thee up to me: what hast thou done? Jesus answered: My kingdom is not of this world. If my kingdom were of this world, my servants would certainly strive that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now my kingdom is not from hence. Pilate, therefore, said to him: Art thou a king then? Jesus answered: Thou sayest that I am a king. For this was I born, and for this came I into the world; that I should give testimony to the truth: every one that is of the truth heareth my voice. Pilate saith to him: What is truth? And when he had said this, he went forth again to the Jews; and saith to them: I find no cause in him. But you have a custom that I should release one unto you at the pasch: will you, therefore, that I release unto you the king of the Jews? Then they all cried again, saying: Not this man, but Barabbas. And Barabbas was a robber.

“Then, therefore, Pilate took Jesus, and scourged him. And the soldiers, plating a crown of thorns, put it upon his head: and about him they put a purple garment. And they came to him, and said: Hail, king of the Jews: and they gave him blows. Pilate, therefore, went forth again, and saith to them: Behold, I bring him forth to you, that you may know that I find no cause in him. (So Jesus came forth, bearing the crown of thorns, and the purple garment.) And he saith to them: Behold the man. When the chief priests, therefore, and the officers had seen him, they cried out, saying: Crucify him, crucify him. Pilate saith to them: Take him you, and crucify him: for I find no cause in him. The Jews answered him: We have a law; and according to the law he ought to die; because he made himself the Son of God. When Pilate, therefore, had heard this saying, he feared the more. And he entered into the hall again: and he said to Jesus: Whence art thou? But Jesus gave him no answer. Pilate therefore saith to him: Speakest thou not to me? knowest thou not that I have power to crucify thee, and I have power to release thee. Jesus answered: Thou shouldst not have any power against me, unless it were given thee from above. Therefore, he that hath delivered me to thee hath the

greater sin. And from thenceforth Pilate sought to release him. But the Jews cried out, saying: If thou release this man, thou art not Cesar's friend: for whosoever maketh himself a king, speaketh against Cesar. Now when Pilate had heard these words, he brought Jesus forth; and sat down in the judgment-seat, in the place that is called Lithostrotos, and in Hebrew Gabbatha. And it was the parascève of the pasch, about the sixth hour: and he saith to the Jews: Behold your king. But they cried out: Away with him, away with him; crucify him. Pilate saith to them: Shall I crucify your king? The chief priests answered: We have no king but Cesar. Then, therefore, he delivered him to them to be crucified. And they took Jesus, and led him forth. And bearing his own cross, he went forth to that place which is called Calvary, but in Hebrew Golgotha: Where they crucified him; and with him two others, one on each side, and Jesus in the midst. And Pilate wrote a title also: and he put it upon the cross. And the writing was, JESUS OF NAZARETH, THE KING OF THE JEWS. This title, therefore, many of the Jews read, because the place where Jesus was crucified, was near to the city: and it was written in Hebrew, in Greek, and in Latin. Then the chief priests of the Jews said to Pilate: Write not, the king of the Jews; but that he said, I am the king of the Jews. Pilate answered: What I have written, I have written. Then the soldiers, when they had crucified him, took his garments (and they made four parts, to every soldier a part) and also his coat. Now the coat was without seam, woven from the top throughout. They said then one to another: Let us not cut it, but let us cast lots for it, whose it shall be; that the Scripture might be fulfilled, saying: They have parted my garments among them, and upon my vesture they have cast lots. And the soldiers, indeed, did these things. Now there stood by the cross of Jesus, his mother, and his mother's sister, Mary of Cleophas, and Mary Magdalene. When Jesus, therefore, saw his mother and the disciple standing, whom he loved, he saith to his mother: Woman, behold thy son. After that, he saith to the disciple: Behold thy mother. And from that hour the disciple took her to his own. Afterwards Jesus, knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the Scripture might be fulfilled, said: I thirst. Now there was a vessel set there, full of vinegar. And they, putting a sponge full of vinegar, about hyssop, offered it to his mouth. When Jesus, therefore, had taken the vinegar, he said: It is consummated. And bowing his head, he gave up the ghost."

Here all kneel, and pause a little, to meditate on the redemption of mankind.

"Then the Jews, (because it was the parascève) that the bodies might not remain upon the cross on the sabbath-day, (for that was a great sabbath-day) besought Pilate that their legs might be broken, and that they might be taken away. The soldiers, therefore, came: and they broke the legs of the first, and of the other that was crucified with him. But when they came to Jesus, and



saw that he was already dead, they did not break his legs: But one of the soldiers opened his side with a spear: and immediately there came out blood and water. And he that saw it, gave testimony: and his testimony is true. And he knoweth that he saith true; that you also may believe. For these things were done, that the Scripture might be fulfilled: You shall not break a bone of him. And again another Scripture saith: They shall look on him whom they pierced. And after these things Joseph of Arimathea (because he was a disciple of Jesus, but in private, for fear of the Jews) besought Pilate that he might take away the body of Jesus. And Pilate permitted him. He came, therefore, and took away the body of Jesus. And Nicodemus also came: he who at first came to Jesus by night, bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about a hundred pound. They took, therefore, the body of Jesus, and bound it in linen-cloths with the spices, as it is the custom with the Jews to bury. And there was, in the place where he was crucified, a garden; and in the garden a new sepulchre, wherein no man had yet been laid. There, therefore, by reason of the parasceve of the Jews, they laid Jesus, because the sepulchre was nigh at hand."

After the Passion is sung, the priest, according to the example of Christ, who, while hanging on the cross offered up a prayer for all men, prays first for the Church, then for the Pope, the Bishops, priests, deacons, and all the faithful, for the catechumens (those who are to receive baptism,) and finally for those who are separated from the Church, even for the Jews and heathen; so that, as Christ died for all men, all men should become partakers of the fruits of redemption. He also prays that God may preserve the fidelity of the faithful to the Church, and may bring the erring and the unbelieving to the knowledge of truth. At the conclusion of each prayer, the priest and those who assist him make a genuflection, except in the prayer for the Jews in which it is omitted, for the reason that they bent their knees in mockery before Christ.

Then the Priest takes the veiled crucifix into his hands, and shows it to the people, after having uncovered it gradually. This ceremony indicates how the crucified Saviour was at first despised and unknown to the world, but that after a time His name was proclaimed over the whole earth, and His worship everywhere established. The priest, as he uncovers one part after the other of the crucifix, sings three times:

Behold the wood of the cross.

And the Choir answers:

On which the salvation of the world was hanged; come, let us adore.

The uncovered crucifix is then laid by a Priest upon a cushion, prepared for that purpose in front of the Altar, where he adores first, and then the Clergy and Laity; all kneeling thrice on both knees, and kissing the wounds of the crucifix. During the adoration of the Cross, the Choir sings the following verses:

My people! what have I done to thee? Or in what have I grieved thee?  
Answer me.

V. Because I brought thee out of the land of Egypt: thou hast prepared a cross for thy Saviour.

Holy God.

Holy God.

Holy and strong God.

Holy and strong God.

Holy and immortal God! have mercy on us.

Holy and immortal God! have mercy on us.

V. Because I led thee through the desert forty years and fed thee with manna, and brought thee into an excellent land; thou hast prepared a cross for thy Saviour.

V. What more should I have done to thee, and have not done? I have planted thee for my most beautiful vineyard: and thou hast proved very bitter to me: for in my thirst thou gavest me vinegar to drink; and with a spear thou hast pierced the side of thy Saviour.

V. For thy sake I scourged Egypt with her first born; and thou hast delivered me to be scourged.

V. I have brought thee out of Egypt, having drowned Pharaoh in the Red Sea: and thou hast delivered me over to the chief priests.

V. I opened the sea before thee: and thou with a spear hast opened my side.

V. I went before thee in a pillar of the cloud; and thou hast brought me to the palace of Pilate.

V. I fed thee with manna in the desert; and thou hast beaten me with buffets and scourges.

V. I gave thee wholesome water to drink out of the rock; and thou hast given me gall and vinegar.

V. For thy sake I struck the kings of the Chananites; and thou hast struck my head with a reed.

V. I gave thee a royal sceptre; and thou hast given me a crown of thorns.

V. I have exalted thee with great strength; and thou hast hanged me on the gibbet of the cross.

Both sides repeat "Popule meus," and then sing the following Antiphon:

*Ant.* We adore Thy cross, O Lord! and we praise and glorify Thy holy resurrection: for by the wood of the Cross the whole earth is filled with joy.

*Psalm.* May God have mercy on us and bless us; may his countenance shine upon us, and may he have mercy on us.—We adore, &c.

When the adoration of the Cross is almost finished, the candles upon the altar are lighted; and after the adoration, the Cross is placed again upon the altar. Then the Priest with his Ministers and Clergy goes in procession to the place where the B. Sacrament was put the day before; from whence he brings it back in the same order as it was carried thither. During the procession is sung the hymn "Vexilla regis predeunt."

Behold the royal ensigns fly,  
 Bearing the Cross' mystery ;  
 Where life itself did death endure,  
 And by the death did life procure.

A cruel spear led out a flood  
 Of water, mixed with saving blood,  
 Which gushing from the Saviour's side,  
 Drown'd our offences in the tide.

The mystery we now unfold,  
 Which David's faithful verse foretold,  
 Of our Lord's kingdom, whilst we see,  
 God ruling nations from a tree.

O lovely tree, whose branches wore  
 The royal purple of his gore !  
 How glorious does thy body shine.  
 Supporting members so divine !

The world's blest balance thou art made,  
 On thee, our ransom, Christ is weigh'd,  
 Our sins, though great, his pains outweigh,  
 And rescue hell's expected prey.

Hail, holy cross ! Hail mournful tree,  
 Our hope, with Christ, is nailed on thee ;  
 Grant to the just increase of grace,  
 And every sinner's crime efface.

Blest Trinity ! we praises sing  
 To thee from whom all graces spring :  
 Celestial crowns on those bestow,  
 Who conquer by the cross below. Amen.

The Priest having come back to the altar, places the holy Sacrament on it, fumes it with incense, on his knees, and lays the sacred host on the corporal. Then wine and water are put into the chalice, which is set on the altar, and the incense is put into the censer ; with which the Priest fumes the sacred host, and the offering of wine and water, saying :

May this incense, which thou hast blest, ascend to Thee, O Lord ! and may Thy mercy descend upon us.

Then he fumes the altar, saying :

Let my prayer, O Lord ! be directed as incense in Thy sight : the lifting up of my hands, as an ev'ning sacrifice. Set a watch, O Lord ! before my mouth, and a door round about my lips ; that my heart may not incline to evil words, to make excuses in sins.

When he gives the censer to the Deacon, he says :

May the Lord kindle in us the fire of His love, and the flame of eternal charity. Amen.



After this, he goes down from the altar on the Epistle side, and there washes his hands. Then returning to the middle of the altar, he says, bowing down :

In a spirit of humility, and with contrition of heart, we pray Thee, O Lord! to make us acceptable to Thee, and let our sacrifice be so performed this day in Thy sight, that it may be pleasing to Thee, O Lord, our God.

Then turning to the people, he says :

Pray, brethren! that my sacrifice and yours may be acceptable to God, the Father Almighty.

And turning again to the altar, he says :

Let us pray.

Instructed by Thy wholesome precepts, and following Thy divine institution, we presume to say :

Our Father, who art in heaven; hallowed be Thy name; Thy kingdom come: Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation.

*R.* But deliver us from evil.

The Priest in a low tone says "Amen," and then says aloud :

Deliver us, O Lord! we beseech Thee, from all evils, past, present, and to come; and by the intercession of the blessed and glorious ever Virgin Mary, mother of God, of Thy blessed Apostles Peter and Paul, and of Andrew, and all the Saints, mercifully grant peace in our days: that by the assistance of Thy mercy we may be always free from sin, and secure from all disturbance; through the same Lord Jesus Christ, Thy Son, who liveth and reigneth with Thee, and the Holy Ghost, one God, for ever and ever.

*R.* Amen.

After this prayer, having adored on his knees, he puts the paten under the sacred host, which with his right hand he elevates, that it may be seen by the people; and immediately divides it into three parts, putting the last into the chalice. Then he says the following prayer:

Let not the participation of Thy body, O Lord Jesus Christ! which though unworthy I presume to receive, turn to my judgment and condemnation: but through Thy mercy let it be for me an effectual safeguard and remedy of soul and body; who with God the Father, and the Holy Ghost, livest and reignest one God, world without end. Amen.

Then he kneels and takes the paten with the body of Christ, and says with the greatest humility and reverence:

I will take the heavenly bread, and invoke the name of the Lord.

Then striking his breast, he says thrice :

Lord ! I am not worthy that Thou shouldst enter under my roof ; but only say the word, and my soul shall be healed.

After which, he signs himself with the blessed Sacrament, saying :

The body of our Lord Jesus Christ preserve my soul to life everlasting. Amen.

Then he reverently receives the body, and immediately after the particle of the sacred host with the wine in the chalice. And having, as usual, washed his fingers and taken the purification, bowing in the middle of the altar, with his hands joined, he says :

Grant, O Lord that what we have taken with our mouth, we may receive with a pure mind, and that of a temporal gift, it may prove an eternal remedy.

After this, the Priest, having made a reverence to the altar, departs.

In Catholic countries, the different churches are visited by the faithful, either singly or in procession, to perform their devotion before a crucifix. These processions are called Roman Stations, and represent the way of the cross, which our Saviour took when burdened with the cross, driven by Roman soldiers, and loaded with abuse, in order to consummate His great sacrifice upon the cross.

On this day, as on Holy Thursday and Saturday, the following prayer is said in all the canonical hours : “ Look down, O Lord ! we beseech Thee, on this Thy family, for which our Lord Jesus Christ was pleased to be delivered into the hands of the wicked, and to suffer the torments of the cross. Who with Thee and the Holy Ghost, liveth and reigneth one God, world without end. Amen.

#### INSTRUCTION HOW TO MEDITATE WITH ADVANTAGE ON THE PASSION OF CHRIST.

“ Oh, all ye that pass by, attend and see if there be any sorrow like to my sorrow.”—*Lament*, 1 : 12.

##### *I. The profit of meditating on the Passion of Christ.*

1. A proper meditation on the Passion of Christ is every way fitted to make men better. Whoever considers that Jesus suffered such unspeakable pains, and so cruel a death, to deliver him, can not indeed continue longer in sin ; he must hate it as the cause of the death of Jesus ; must feel kindled within him an inextinguishable fire of love for one who endured every thing out of love for him ; must resolve earnestly to follow Jesus in humility, meekness, love for his enemies, patience, and obedience. This powerful effect of meditating on the Passion of Jesus, all the saints have experienced in great degrees.

2. The Passion of Christ gives us unusual strength in combat with temptation. On this point St. Augustine says, beautifully: "In all my adversities I have not found any remedies so powerful as the Passion and wounds of Jesus. In them I sleep securely, and rest without fear. Christ died for us. Death has, in itself, no bitterness that Christ has not changed to sweetness. All my hope rests on the death of my Lord. His death is my merit, my refuge, my salvation, my life, and my resurrection. Does a sinful thought disturb me, I hide myself in the wounds of Christ. Does the flesh press me down, I rise again by remembering the wounds of my Lord. Does the devil secretly try to ensnare me, I fly to the innermost mercy of my Lord, and Satan retires. Does the fire of impurity move my flesh, it will be quenched by again meditating on the wounds of my Lord. All my hope and the certainty of my confidence rest on the precious blood of my Lord Jesus. In it I refresh myself when the weight of my sins would cast me down and throw me into despair. Through that same blood I hope for the forgiveness of all my sins, and to come one day, O my God, to Thee."

II. *The method of meditating rightly on the Passion of Christ.*

1. First place before yourself what Jesus suffered from the Jews, the Gentiles, and even His own disciples, who all forsook Him. Then consider His suffering at the agony in the Garden of Gethsemani, at the treachery of Judas, at the scorn, and railing, and contempt which were poured upon Him during the whole time of His Passion. Think on His pains at the scourging, on the way to Golgotha, at being deprived of His garments, at the crowning with thorns, at the crucifying; finally, reflect on that excess of sorrow which He endured, in feeling that He was for a moment forsaken by His Father. There is **no sorrow** or grief of soul, no pain of body, that He did not endure.

2. Yet we must not stop here, but earnestly reflect *why* Jesus went through so many and so great sufferings. He, the Son of God, holiness and innocence itself, suffered not for His own sake, but to deliver mankind, who, since Adam's fall, have walked in the way of perdition, from sin, death, and hell, to take away their guilt and punishment, and of children of the devil, to make them children of God. He came into the world, suffered, and died that we might have life. Oh, what sacrificing love! Consider the greatness of it: think that Jesus has suffered all this for thee: that without the merits of His Passion and death thou wouldst go to eternal ruin: that He has procured for thee these merits when thou hadst no merits of thine own, even when thou didst so often offend Him: imagine to yourself that He says to you from the cross: "O Christian, what more could I have done for thee! See at what price I have redeemed thee!"

If one seriously ponders these things, his heart must be harder than stone, if he is not thereby moved to hatred of sin, and to love for Jesus.

3. But this is not the perfect fruit of meditation on the Passion of Jesus.



By contemplating His Passion, we ought to be transformed into the likeness of Jesus. In the school of the suffering Redeemer we should learn to be humble, meek, patient, obedient unto death, to love our enemies, to return good for evil. Then, and then only, has one rightly meditated on the Passion of Christ, when he has come to resemble the object of his meditation—Jesus his Lord and Master.

As often, therefore, as thou thinkest on the Passion of Christ, whether in making the stations of the cross, or in reciting the Rosary, or before an image of the suffering Redeemer, endeavor not only to have pity for His sufferings; not only to give Him assurance of your love, but also to impress deep upon your heart, and to imitate the virtues practiced by Him in His Passion.

#### THE SPECTATORS OF THE CRUCIFIXION AND THE MEN OF THE PRESENT DAY.

On Golgotha, before the temple and city of Jerusalem, in presence of from two to three millions of Jews, gathered from all countries of the earth to that city, to attend the feast of the Passover, Jesus, the Son of God, hung nailed to the cross, a propitiatory sacrifice for mankind, loaded with all their sins. Near the cross of her dying Son stood Mary His mother, filled with sorrow; at her side John, the beloved disciple, and at the foot of the cross Mary Magdalen, the penitent, bowed down, as if senseless, to the ground, in grief and sorrow convulsively clasping the wood of the cross with her hands. At the right of Jesus hung a thief, turning to the Saviour in penance, while at His left groaned another malefactor, blaspheming the Holy One of Israel with a hardened heart. Around the Saviour, as He struggled with death, stood the Doctors of the Law and the Pharisees, a hypocritical company of crafty reprobates, through whose hatred Jesus, the innocent Lamb, was persecuted even in the hour of His death, and who, blind to all the predictions of the prophets, which yet they had read; insensible to all the miracles which Jesus had wrought before their eyes, as evidence of His mission, and filled with unbelief and malignity, blasphemed the dying Redeemer. Along with these, at some distance from the cross, stood a multitude of indifferent persons, who, having come to Jerusalem to attend the feast of the Passover, had heard of Jesus, and were come to witness His crucifixion. Not far off from them, the barbarous soldiers and executioners were assembled, to divide among themselves His garments.

Such were the witnesses of the crucifixion of our God and Saviour; divided into different classes, they represent men of the present day.

There were but three persons near the cross who remained immovable in faith and truest love to the Saviour, ready to die with and for Him. Only three were there who, though derided and mocked, taunted and jeered at, retreated

not from the cross; these three were Mary, John, and Magdalen. Answering to these in our day are those who, pure and innocent like Mary and John, or weeping over their sins like Magdalen, acknowledge Jesus to be their Saviour, faithfully adhere to Him, and suffer not themselves to be separated from Him, either by persecution, or even by death. As in that hour at the cross, so also now, the number of the faithful is small; but great, too great, is the number who, like the indifferent spectators of the crucifixion, are neither open enemies of Jesus, nor His decided friends. Fear of men, human respect, attachment to the world and its pleasures, prevent them from declaring themselves on His side. Although baptized in the name of Jesus, and observing outwardly the laws of the Church established by Him, they have fallen into indifference, have no living faith, and, like a reed shaken with the wind, vibrate between Jesus and the world. They dread the raillery of so-called enlightened and cultivated persons, among whom are many, like the Doctors of the Law and the Pharisees, destitute of all faith in Jesus, bearing in their hearts only hatred and contempt for the Church of God; they avoid taking up the cross, which is too heavy for their effeminacy; they commit, indeed, no public crime, value highly their good name, occasionally comply with some precept of the Church, but they are open to every error, and lend a willing ear to every calumny against the religion of Jesus and its ministers. Instead of defending fearlessly, everywhere and at all times, Jesus and the holy faith which He revealed and taught, they draw back, keep silence, and even favor the enemies of the Church, in order not to be mocked by them. Thus, neither cold nor warm, they verify the words of the Scripture: "*Because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will begin to vomit thee out of my mouth.*"

Among the large number of indifferent and lukewarm Catholics, there are also to be found many like those Pharisees and Doctors of the Law at the cross. They are such as at the present time deliberately extinguish the light of truth, and who having rejected the faith of Jews, are become incapable of receiving instruction. Pride and insolence have blinded them: with their feeble reason they desire to comprehend the mysteries of God; with their poor intellect to investigate His ways, to be even equal to God; denying revealed truth, denying the existence of heaven and hell, like brutes they live, and die without God, and their end is perdition. But few among them return penitent to Jesus, acknowledging their sin, like the thief on His right hand: rather, like the murderer on His left, they cease not to blaspheme the Crucified, and to slander His holy Church. On the same side are found those apostates and heretics, who, like the cruel soldiers, part His garments among them, and cast lots for His seamless vesture.

Those garments which the soldiers divided, are the truths which apostates and heretics acknowledge in spite of their separation from the Church. For they are divided into sects, possessing but fragments and portions only of that

one whole and perfect body of truth which Jesus gave to His Church. "*They cast lots upon the seamless vesture.*"

This seamless vesture is His holy Church, which never can be divided. She is one, and shall remain so until the end of time. About this one true Church, all sects and heresies contend. They all would claim to belong to her: but they forget that as the seamless vesture of Christ could be gained by but *one* of the soldiers, so there can be but one Church—the Church of Christ—who chose His apostles to be its pillars, and their successors, the Bishops and Priests, its only true and lawful ministers.

Thus do those who were present at the crucifixion represent men in our day. As on Golgotha, so are there now different classes, the pure and innocent, penitent and hardened sinners, the decided followers of Christ, and the lukewarm, having only the name of Christians, infidels, apostates, and heretics.

To which of these, O Christian, do you belong? and to which do you desire to belong? Be decided; for the hour of death is nigh. The Lord has already put the axe to the tree. He hath the winnowing shovel in His hand, to clear His floor. Are you not a follower of Christ, and a child of His holy Church? You will be borne away like chaff by the wind. Are you a firm and constant follower of the Church, you will triumph for ever as a victorious knight of the cross, with Mary, the mother of the faithful, with John and Magdalen, on that day when the cross shall appear in the clouds of heaven. Be decided!

#### ASPIRATIONS AT THE CROSS OF JESUS.

BY THOMAS A KEMPIS.

My God and my Saviour, Thou didst carry the cross, that I, denying myself and bearing my own cross, might follow Thee. Thou wast nailed to that cross, that I might be crucified to the world, and the world to me. Thy body was raised above the ground, that my heart might be lifted up to the things in heaven. In Thy most bitter anguish Thou didst feel the pain of being forsaken even by Thy Heavenly Father, that in all my sufferings and in my death I might have in Thee a tried and merciful high-priest. Thy heart melted in compassion towards Thy mother and Thy faithful disciple John, to move me also to compassion. Thou didst pray for Thine enemies, that with my whole heart I might forgive mine, and leave judgment to Thee. Thou didst consume the work of redemption to obtain forgiveness, grace, and eternal life for me. Thou didst permit Thy side to be opened that Thy blood might ransom me, and that the water might wash me from my sins. Thou didst bow Thy head, O merciful God; bow it down to me, in token that Thou acceptest my love. Without Thee, I can not live; to die for Thee would be my gain. At Thy grave, O most adorable Redeemer of mankind, I will mortify and bury



the old man, with all desire for sin, and all the pleasure of doing evil. I will—Oh, strengthen my feeble will with Thy sanctifying grace—I will prepare for Thee a sepulchre in my heart, that through Thee the new man may be raised up, that with Thee I may arise from death, and walk, in newness of life, to a happy eternity. Amen.

## HOLY SATURDAY.

THIS day is called Holy Saturday, because Christ, the Holy of Holies, was on this day laid in the grave, and because different blessings, full of meaning, take place on it.

On this day, which is also the Vigil of Easter, the sorrow of the Church in regard to the death of our Saviour, gives place to feelings of joy, which increase, as His glorious Resurrection approaches.

On the last three days of Holy Week the Church recounts to us all the principal events of the redemption perfected by Christ. On Holy Thursday the unbloody sacrifice of the new law, the greatest testament of the love of our Saviour, before His death, was instituted. On Good Friday the great bloody sacrifice upon the cross was consummated, and the redemption of mankind perfected thereby. On Holy Saturday, while Our Lord lay in the sepulchre, the victory over hell was accomplished and the approaching reception of the forefathers into heaven was announced by Him.

"He was put to death, indeed, in the flesh, but brought to life by the Spirit, in which he came and preached to those spirits who were in prison: who in time past had been incredulous, when they waited for the patience of God in the days of Noe, when the ark was building," (1 Pet, 3: 18-20.)

In another place the Apostle adds: "For this cause was also the gospel preached to the dead, that they might be judged according to men in the flesh, but may live according to God in the Spirit." (1 Pet, 4: 6.)

The special blessings on Holy Saturday are: the blessing of the new fire, of the paschal candle, and of the Baptismal font.

The blessing of the new fire takes place in the morning, at the entrance of the church. (In the early times of Christianity this ceremony commenced in the afternoon.) The old fire, extinguished beforehand, represents the old law, which ended with the death of our Saviour. The new fire signifies not only the BURNING LOVE, which through Christ was imparted anew to the world, but also CHRIST HIMSELF, which heavenly light was extinguished by His death, but appeared again in His resurrection.

At the blessing of the new fire the priest reads the following prayer.

O God! who by Thy Son, the corner-stone, hast bestowed on the faithful the fire of Thy brightness; sanctify this new fire produced from a flint for our use; and grant, that during this paschal solemnity, we may be so inflamed with heavenly desires, that with pure minds we may come to the solemnity of eternal splendor; through the same Christ our Lord.

*R. Amen.*

O Lord God, Almighty Father, never-failing light! who art the author of all light; bless this light, which is blessed and sanctified by Thee, who hast enlightened the whole world: that we may be enlightened by that light, and inflamed with the fire of Thy brightness; and, as Thou didst give light to Moses, when he went out of Egypt; so illuminate our hearts and senses, that we may obtain light and life everlasting; through Christ our Lord.

*R. Amen.*

Let us pray.

Holy Lord, Almighty Father, eternal God! vouchsafe to co-operate with us, who bless this fire in Thy name, and in that of Thy only Son, Jesus Christ our Lord and God, and of the Holy Ghost; assist us against the fiery darts of the enemy, and illuminate us with Thy heavenly grace: who livest and reignest with the same only Son and Holy Ghost, one God for ever and ever.

*R. Amen.*

Then he blesses the five grains of incense that are to be fixed in the Paschal-candle, saying the following prayer:

Pour forth, we beseech Thee, Almighty God! thy abundant blessing on this incense, and kindle, O invisible regenerator! the brightness of this night; that not only the sacrifice which is offered this night, may shine by the secret mixture of Thy light; but also, that into whatever place any thing sanctified by these mystical prayers shall be carried, there, by the power of Thy majesty, all the malicious artifices of the devil may be defeated; through Christ our Lord.

*R. Amen.*

Whilst he blesses the grains of incense, an Acolyte puts some of the blessed fire into the censer, and the Priest, after the prayer, puts incense into it, blessing it as usual, saying:

May thou be blessed by him, in whose honor thou shalt be burnt.—  
*Amen.*

Then he sprinkles the grains of incense and the fire thrice with holy-water, saying:

Thou shalt sprinkle me, O Lord! with hyssop, and I shall be cleansed: Thou shalt wash me, and I shall be made whiter than snow.

After this the Priest fumes them thrice with the censer. Then the Deacon, putting on a white

Dalmatic, takes the rod with the three candles, representing the blessed Trinity. The thurifer goes first with an Acolyte, carrying in a plate the five grains of incense; the Subdeacon with the cross follows, and the Clergy in order; then the Deacon with the three candles, and last of all the Priest. When the Deacon is come to the church, an Acolyte, who carries a candle lighted from the new fire, lights one of the three candles on the top of the rod, and the Deacon, holding up the rod, kneels, as do all the rest except the Subdeacon, and sings alone:

Lumen Christi.

Behold the light of Christ.

The Choir answers:

Deo gratias.

Thanks be to God.

The same is done in the middle of the church, and before the altar, when the other two candles are lighted.

After this the blessing of the Paschal Candle takes place. This candle must be of pure white wax, and larger than any common candle. The Paschal candle signifies Christ—the wax His body, the wick His soul, and the light His Divinity.

It was represented in the old law by the pillar of fire by which the Israelites were guided on their way from Egypt through the Red Sea; for in the same manner Christ, the true light, has brought us from the servitude of Satan and the darkness of sin to the freedom and light of the children of God. The five holes in the Paschal candle, in the form of a cross, denote the five wounds of Christ, and the five grains of incense signify the aromatic spices that embalmed Him in the sepulchre. The lighting of the Paschal candle is a representation of His rising again to a new life, and the lighting afterwards of the lamps and other candles, teaches the faithful that the resurrection of the Head will be followed by that of the members.

The blessing of the Paschal Candle commences by the Deacon singing the following most beautiful hymn, the Exultet.

Let now the heavenly troop of angels rejoice; let the divine mysteries be joyfully celebrated; and let a sacred trumpet proclaim the victory of so great a king. Let the earth also be filled with joy, being illuminated with such resplendent rays; and let it see the darkness which overspread the whole world chased away by the splendor of our eternal King. Let our mother the Church also rejoice, being adorned by the rays of so great a light; and let this temple resound with the joyful acclamations of the people. Wherefore, beloved brethren! you who are now present at the admirable brightness of this holy light, I beseech you to invoke with me the name of the Almighty God. That he, who hath been pleased above my desert, to admit me into the number of his Levites, will, by an effusion of his light upon me, enable me to celebrate the praises of this emblematic taper: through our Lord Jesus Christ his Son; who with Him and the Holy Ghost, liveth and reigneth one God for ever and ever.

R. Amen.



*V.* The Lord be with you.

*R.* And with thy spirit.

*V.* Lift up your hearts.

*R.* We have them lifted up to the Lord.

*V.* Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

*R.* It is meet and just.

It is truly meet and just to proclaim with all the affection of our heart and soul, and with the sound of our voice, the invisible God the Father Almighty, and his only Son our Lord Jesus Christ. Who paid for us to his eternal Father, the debt of Adam; and by his sacred blood canceled the guilt contracted by original sin. For this is the Paschal solemnity, in which the true lamb was slain, by whose blood the doors of the faithful are consecrated. This is the night in which Thou formerly broughtest forth our forefathers the children of Israel out of Egypt, leading them dry-foot through the red sea. This then is the night, which dissipated the darkness of sin, by the light of the pillar. This is the night, which now delivers all over the world those that believe in Christ from the vices of the world and darkness of sin, restores them to grace, and clothes with sanctity. This is the night, in which Christ broke the chains of death, and ascended conqueror from hell. O how admirable is Thy goodness towards us! O how inestimable is Thy love! Thou hast delivered up Thy Son, to redeem a slave. O truly necessary sin of Adam, which the death of Christ has blotted out! O happy fault, that merited such and so great a Redeemer! O truly blessed night! which alone deserved to know the time and hour, when Christ rose again from hell. This is the night of which it is written: And the night shall be as light as day; and the night shineth upon me in my pleasures. Therefore the sanctification of this night blots out crimes, washes away sins, and restores innocence to the fallen, and joy to the sorrowful. It banishes enmities, produces concord, and humbles empires.

Here the Deacon fixes the five grains of incense in the candle, in the form of a cross.

Therefore, on this sacred night receive, O holy Father! the evening sacrifice of this incense, which Thy holy Church, by the hands of her ministers, presents to Thee in this solemn oblation of this wax candle, made out of the labor of bees.—And now we know the excellence of this pillar, which the sparkling fire lights for the honor of God.

Here the Deacon lights the candle with one of the three candles on the rod.

Which fire, though now divided, suffers no loss from the communication of its light. Because it is fed by the melted wax, produced by the bee, to make this taper.

Here the lamps are lighted.

O Truly blessed night! which plundered the Egyptians, and enriched the Hebrews. A night in which heaven is united to earth, and God to man. We beseech Thee, therefore, O Lord! that this candle, consecrated to the honor of Thy name, may continue burning to dissipate the darkness of this night; and being accepted as a sweet odor, may be united with the celestial lights. Let the morning-star find it burning. That morning-star, I mean, which never sets. —Which being returned from hell, shone with brightness on mankind. We beseech Thee, therefore, O Lord! to grant us peace during this Paschal solemnity, and with Thy constant protection to rule, govern, and preserve us, Thy servants, all the Clergy, and the devout Laity, together with our Holy Father, Pope N.; and our Bishop N.; through the same Lord Jesus Christ, Thy Son, who, with Thee and the Holy Ghost liveth and reigneth one God, for ever and ever.

R. Amen.

With the blessing of the Paschal candle is connected the blessing of the Agnus Dei (the Lamb of God,) which takes place either to-day or on Saturday before Low-Sunday (the first Sunday after Easter), by the Pope of Rome.

In former times they were made out of the remnants of the Paschal Candle of the previous year; the melted wax was then mixed with oil, and this mixture made into a form resembling that of a lamb, signifying the true Paschal Lamb Jesus Christ, who was sacrificed for us. At the present time new white wax is mixed with oil and chrism, and made in the form of small, flat cakes, upon which is imprinted the figure of a lamb with a cross; these Agnus Deis are then put in a vessel filled with holy water, and blessed by the Pope, who distributes them among the Cardinals, Prelates, and others who are present.

After the blessing of the Paschal Candle, twelve lessons are read from the Old Testament, containing the most important prophecies from the time of Adam to the last period of the old law, and referring to the great work of redemption, the perfection of which through Christ the Church commemorates during these days. Each lesson is concluded by a prayer, that in the letter of the old law we may comprehend the spirit of the new, and recognizing the fulfillment of the great promises, avoid sin, and rise to a new life.

*The first prophecy*, (Genesis 1 and 2 : 1-2,) relates the history of the creation, and refers to the new spiritual creation of man through the Son of God.

*The second prophecy*, (Genesis Ch. 6 and 8) contains the history of the deluge and the preservation of Noe and his family, as a type of the deliverance of mankind through holy baptism, by which they are led into the Church of Christ, represented by the ark.

*The third prophecy*, (Genesis 22: 1-19) relates to us the history of the sacrifice of Isaac, which was a type of Christ's bloody sacrifice upon the cross.

*The fourth prophecy*, (Exodus 14 : 24 ; 15 : 4,) speaks of the wonderful passage of the Israelites through the Red Sea, which was the type of the deliverance of mankind from the servitude of Satan.

*The fifth prophecy*, (Isaias 54 : 17 ; 55 : 11,) and

*The sixth*, (Baruch 3 : 9-38,) points especially to the new covenant which God would make with man, and to the eternal happiness of heaven obtained thereby.

*The seventh prophecy*, (Ezekiel 37 : 1-14,) refers to the partial restoration of the Israelites, then in bondage, which was a type of our own resurrection from the dead, to a new and happy life.

*The eighth prophecy*, (Isaias 4. 5 : 1-2,) dwells especially upon the protection shown by God to those who were delivered from bondage, but at the same time points to the establishing of the new Jerusalem, signifying the Christian Church.

*The ninth prophecy*, (Exodus 12 : 1-11,) contains the precept of the Lord to the Israelites in regard to the killing and eating of the Paschal lamb before their exodus from Egypt, which was a type of Christ sacrificed on the cross.

*The tenth prophecy*, (Jonas 3,) speaking of the preachings of Jonas the prophet in the city of Ninive, refers to the resurrection of Christ on the third day after His death, of which Jonas, remaining in the whale's belly for three days and three nights, was a very appropriate type.

*The eleventh prophecy*, (Deuteronomy 31 : 22 ; 32 : 4,) contains the address of Moses to the Israelites, and is a testimony of the length to which they carried their malice and stubbornness by crucifying the Saviour.

*The twelfth and last prophecy*, (Daniel 3 : 1-24,) contains the history of the three young men who were cast into the fiery oven, and shows the nothingness of idolatry, and the sublimity of the true worship, which alone can save man from the flames of hell.

After these prophecies the solemn blessing of the Baptismal Font takes place. It was usual in the early times of Christianity, on the eve of Holy Saturday, to baptize those who were sufficiently prepared ; that, according to St. Paul "baptized in the death of Christ," (Rom, 6 : 3,) they should avoid sin, and washed in the waters of regeneration, should begin to lead a new, virtuous, and holy life, thus celebrating with Christ the feast of a spiritual resurrection.

In commemoration of this beautiful usage, the Church on this day blesses before Mass the Baptismal Font.

While the Priest with his assistants proceeds to the Font, the Choir chants the very appropriate Antiphon, taken from the 41st Psalm :

As the hart panteth after the fountains of water ; so my soul panteth after Thee, O God!

V. My soul hath thirsted after the strong living God ; when shall I come and appear before the face of God ?



V. My tears have been my bread day and night, whilst it is said to me daily: where is thy God?

Arrived at the Font, the Priest says the following prayer:

O almighty and everlasting God! mercifully regard the devotion of the people who are to be regenerated, and who, like the hart, pant after the fountain of Thy waters; and mercifully grant, that the thirst of their faith may, by the Sacrament of baptism, sanctify their souls and bodies; through our Lord, &c.

R. Amen.

The Priest then begins the blessing of the Font, saying:

O almighty and everlasting God! be present at these mysteries, be present at these sacraments of Thy great goodness; and send forth the spirit of adoption, to regenerate the new people whom the Font of baptism brings forth; that what is to be done by the ministry of our weakness may be accomplished by the effect of Thy power; through our Lord Jesus Christ, Thy Son, who with Thee and the same Holy Spirit liveth and reigneth one God, for ever and ever.

R. Amen.

V. The Lord be with you.

R. And with thy spirit.

V. Lift up your hearts.

R. We have lifted them up to the Lord.

V. Let us give thanks to the Lord, our God.

R. It is meet and just.

It is truly meet and just, right and profitable to salvation, that we should at all times and in all places give thanks to Thee, O holy Lord, Almighty Father, and eternal God! who by Thy invisible power dost wonderfully produce the effects of Thy sacraments; and, though we are unworthy to administer so great mysteries; yet as Thou dost not forsake the gifts of Thy grace, so Thou inclinest the ears of Thy goodness even to our prayers. O God! whose Spirit in the very beginning of the world moved over the waters; that even then the nature of water might receive the virtue of sanctification; O God! who by water didst wash away the crimes of the guilty world, and by the overflowing of the deluge didst give us a figure of regeneration; that one and the same element might in a mystery be the end of vice, and the origin of virtue—Look, O Lord! on the face of Thy Church, and multiply in her Thy regenerations, who by the streams of Thy abundant grace fillest Thy city with joy, and openest the Fonts of baptism all over the world, for the renewing of the Gentiles: that by the command of Thy majesty, she may receive the grace of Thy only Son from the Holy Ghost.

Here the Priest divides the water in the form of a cross.

Who, by a secret mixture of His divine virtue, may render this water fruitful for the regeneration of men; to the end that those who have been sanctified in the immaculate womb of this divine Font, being born again new creatures, may come forth a heavenly offspring; and that all, however distinguished by sex in body, or age in time, may be brought forth to the same, by grace their spiritual mother. Therefore may all unclean spirits, by Thy command, O Lord! depart far from hence; may the whole malice of diabolical deceit be entirely banished; may no power of the enemy prevail here; may he not fly about to lay his snares: may he not creep in by his secret artifices: may he not corrupt with his infection.

Here he touches the water with his hand.

May this holy and innocent creature be free from all the assaults of the enemy, and purified by the destruction of all his malice. May it become a living fountain, a regenerating water, a purifying stream; that all those who are to be washed in this saving bath may obtain, by the operation of the Holy Ghost, the grace of a perfect purification.

Here he makes the sign of the cross thrice over the Font, saying:

Wherefore I bless thee, O creature of water! by the living God, by the true God, by the holy God; by that God who in the beginning separated thee by His word from the dry land: whose spirit moved over thee.

Here he divides the water with his hand, and throws some of it out towards the four parts of the world, saying:

Who made thee flow from the fountain of Paradise, and commanded thee to water the whole earth with thy four rivers. Who changing thy bitterness, in the desert, unto sweetness, made thee fit to drink, and produced thee out of a rock to quench the thirst of the people. I bless thee also by our Lord Jesus Christ, His only Son; who in Cana of Galilee changed thee into wine, by a wonderful miracle of His power. Who walked upon thee dry-foot, and was baptized in thee by John in the Jordan. Who made thee flow out of His side together with His blood, and commanded His disciples, that such as believed should be baptized in thee, saying: Go, teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.

Do Thou, Almighty God! mercifully assist us who observe this commandment; do Thou graciously inspire us.

He breathes thrice upon the water in the form of a cross, saying:

Do Thou with Thy mouth bless these clear waters; that besides their na-

tural virtue of cleansing the body, they may also be effectual for purifying the soul.

Here the Priest sinks the Paschal Candle into the water three different times, singing each time in a higher tone :

May the virtue of the Holy Ghost descend into all the water of this Font.

Then breathing thrice upon the water, he goes on :

And make the whole substance of this water fruitful, and capable of regenerating.

Here the Paschal Candle is taken out of the water, and he goes on :

Here may the stains of all sins be washed out ; here may human nature, created to Thy image, and reformed to the honor of its author, be cleansed from all the filth of the old man ; that all who receive this sacrament of regeneration may be born again new children of true innocence ; through our Lord Jesus Christ, Thy Son : who is to come to judge the living and the dead, and the world by fire.

*R. Amen.*

Then the people are sprinkled with the blessed water, some of which is reserved to be distributed to the faithful for use in their houses. After this, the Priest pours some oil of Catechumens into the water, in the form of a cross, saying :

May this Font be sanctified and made fruitful by the oil of salvation, for such as are regenerated in it, unto life everlasting.

*R. Amen.*

Then he pours Chrism into it, in the same manner, saying :

May this infusion of the Chrism of our Lord Jesus Christ, and of the Holy Ghost the Comforter, be made in the name of the Holy Trinity.

*R. Amen.*

Lastly, he pours the Oil and Chrism both together into the water, in the form of a cross, saying :

May this mixture of the Chrism of sanctification, and of the oil of unction, and of the water of baptism, be made in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.

*R. Amen.*

Then he mingles the holy oil and Chrism with the baptismal water, which signifies the union of Christ with the people, and is emblematic of the grace of the Holy Ghost, infused into the heart of the Catechumen, together with faith, hope, and charity.

After the blessing of the Font, the Litany of the Saints is chanted, the Priest and his assistants lying prostrate before the altar, praying that Almighty God may grant, through the intercession of



all the Saints, the grace of baptism to all men, in order that, as all have died in sin, all may rise with Christ unto life eternal.

In the early times of Christianity the Catechumens were baptized immediately after the blessing of the Font; after baptism they were robed in white, which dress they wore during the whole octave. During the Mass they held a burning candle in their hand, and received Holy Communion with the other faithful.

After the blessing of the Font, the holy sacrifice of the Mass is begun, which formerly commenced at midnight before Easter on account of the solemn baptism of so many catechumens. At this Mass the Priest is vested in white, the "Gloria in Excelsis," is sung, during which the organ joyously bursts forth in sweet and harmonious tones, in praise of the anticipated resurrection of the Lord, and the bells are rung, announcing to all "men of good will," the glad tidings that Christ is risen. During Mass "Allelujah" (that is, praise to Jehovah,) is sung repeatedly, and the Epistle, Gospel, and Preface evidently point to the resurrection of the Lord.

#### PRAYER.

O God, who didst illustrate this night with the glory of our Lord's resurrection, preserve in the new progeny of Thy family the spirit of adoption which Thou hast given, that, renewed in body and mind, they may exhibit in Thy sight a pure service. Through the same Lord.

#### EPISTLE.—Coloss., 3 : 1-4.

"Brethren, if you be risen with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is sitting at the right hand of God: Mind the things that are above, not the things that are upon the earth. For you are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ shall appear, who is your life, then you also shall appear with him in glory."

By these words of the Apostle, the Church admonishes the faithful that, having risen through the merits of Christ, and by means of the holy Sacraments of baptism and penance, from the grave of their sins to a new and spiritual life, they should direct their thoughts and desires towards heaven, to which Christ returned after having perfected the work of redemption; and which He opened to all His faithful children; for those only who overcome sin and their passions, by leading a pure and spiritual life, can become partakers of eternal glory with Christ.

After the Epistle, the Priest sings thrice Allelujah, each time in a higher tone, which in the same manner is repeated by the Choir, expressing the increasing joy of the Church over the resurrection of the Lord.

GOSPEL.—Matt. 28: 1-7.

“In the end of the Sabbath, when it began to dawn towards the first day of the week, came Mary Magdalene, and the other Mary, to see the sepulchre. And behold there was a great earthquake. For an Angel of the Lord descended from heaven: and coming, rolled back the stone, and sat upon it: And his countenance was as lightning, and his raiment as snow. And for fear of him the guards were struck with terror, and became as dead men. And the Angel answering, said to the women: Fear not you: for I know that you seek Jesus who was crucified. He is not here, for he is risen, as he said. Come, and see the place where the Lord was laid. And going quickly, tell ye his disciples that he is risen: and behold he will go before you into Galilee; there you shall see him. Lo, I have foretold it to you.”

In this Gospel the history of the resurrection is already given. According to the most approved doctors of the Church, the Saviour rose early in the morning of the third day (Easter Sunday) before the grave had been opened. It was not until the holy women had come to visit the sepulchre, that the Angel removed the stone from before it, thus confirming the truth of this great and glorious miracle.

The soldiers, who had been placed there to watch it, had in the mean time fled to the city, announcing to the enemies of Christ the terrible news of His resurrection.

At the same time we see how the love of the two Marys was rewarded by the appearance of an angel.

# LEGENDS.

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## ST. ROGER.

(March 1.)

"Striving after position"

FIVE hundred years ago there lived in France a very pious nobleman by the name of Godfrey, who at the time of his death had reached the advanced age of one hundred years. He left three sons, the oldest of whom, Odinet, inherited the estate of his father; the second died a priest, and the youngest, Roger, manifested even in his early youth a virtuous heart, combined with much talent and love for learning.

Under the guardianship of his uncle, who was the Cardinal Bishop of Toulouse, young Roger enjoyed the benefit of a most careful education in the best institutions of learning. His purity of life, his great industry and knowledge soon placed him in the first rank among his fellow-students, and when very young, he was appointed professor of the secular as well as the canon-law. He occupied this position, however, but a short time, for after devoting himself entirely to the study of theology, and having carefully prepared himself, he was ordained priest.

Meanwhile the Bishop of Aurelia had died, and according to the custom of the country, the clergy and the people assembled to elect a new Bishop. Roger was present, and seeing that many importuned the electors to vote for them, he remarked jestingly to a priest, who was on the point of entering the electoral chamber: "I hope that the electors will remember me." The priest laughingly repeated the remark to some of the electors, who without thinking that their words would be heeded, declared that they would be satisfied with the election of Roger as Bishop. The chairman of the assembly, however, who



knew the piety, great learning, and wisdom of Roger, inspired by the Holy Ghost, said: "Brethren, heaven and earth are witnesses to the declaration you have made. I therefore, with your consent, declare Roger to be Bishop, in the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Be convinced that this is the will of the Holy Ghost, and you can not oppose it without committing a great sin;" whereupon Roger was unanimously elected Bishop.

When Roger was informed that he had been declared Bishop, he was greatly frightened, for his remark had not been made in earnest, and he thought himself unworthy to occupy so high and responsible a position in the Church. He refused in vain, however, to accept the office, for the people also manifested their entire satisfaction at his election.

If St. Roger was distinguished even in his youth by the purity of his character, and the zealous efforts he made to cultivate in his soul the spirit of piety and wisdom, we can imagine how the dignity and importance of the episcopal office must have increased his zeal for the good he could accomplish in the exercise of its duties. He was indefatigable in his efforts to show to the flock entrusted to his care the path leading to heaven; he never withheld his wise counsel when he could benefit a fellow-man; his charity in word and deed was so great, that even his enemies could not but respect him; for no one in need ever left him without having obtained assistance and comfort, and his house was the seat of hospitality.

The only son of Odinet, the elder brother of Roger, having died at Paris, the holy Bishop inherited all the family-possessions. He devoted his large revenues to the establishment of a convent and asylum near his native place for the reception of strangers and for the benefit of the poor.

St. Roger made every effort to exterminate all traces of vice and heresy in his diocese, but there were still some persons, who remained deaf to his most excellent and earnest exhortations, and thus caused much grief to his venerable heart. That their wickedness must have been great in the eyes of God, was made manifest by a terrible conflagration which visited the city, and which destroyed all the houses, with the exception of the Cathedral and the residence of the Bishop.

The people looked upon Roger as a Saint, even during his life-time, on account of his eminent virtues and distinguished piety. When he had reached his ninetieth year, he died, in the odor of sanctity; and the great miracles wrought near his tomb, prove that he was found worthy to join the company of the Saints.

Every one will admire the fidelity with which St. Roger fulfilled the duties of his episcopal office, a fidelity which he shared in common with several of the most excellent Bishops, and with many famous Saints, who, like him, had against their wish been raised to high and responsible positions. These true servants of the Lord, under all circumstances and in whatever position Al-

mighty God placed them, executed their duties faithfully, and labored most zealously for the welfare of their fellow-men. How often, on the contrary, do we find a man occupying an office of trust and emolument, and one which he has perhaps obtained by unjust means, violating his obligations, neglecting his duties, and caring only for the advantages he may derive from his position. Whence comes this difference? Because there are selfish persons, who in all things follow their natural inclinations; and on the other hand persons who are regenerated by the Holy Ghost. Those belonging to the first class are more or less haughty and ambitious, and they will zealously and sometimes unscrupulously strive after every office within their reach, in order to gain the means of gratifying their passions. Those who are regenerated by the Holy Ghost, and who are humble and conscientious, strive not for office and position, but rather shrink from them. Yet if such a person is nevertheless chosen, and obliged to accept a responsible office, he will look upon it as a means by which he can effect much good; he will faithfully discharge his duty, and God, who has placed him in an elevated position, will also bestow upon him His blessing.

Therefore, dear reader, if you are animated by the spirit of Christ, you will not seek after the honors of this world, still less endeavor to obtain an office by means of flattery, persuasion, or by making false promises. You must not envy those who live in splendor, or those who occupy an elevated position in society, but faithfully discharge the duties of the state of life in which it has pleased Almighty God to place you, no matter how humble it may be in the estimation of the world. "Seek ye therefore first the kingdom of God, and his justice, and all these things shall be added unto you." (Matt. 6: 33.)

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### BLESSED CHARLES.

(March 2.)

"The will of God."

SEVERAL centuries ago, in the time of the Crusades, when men went to the Holy Land to wrest the Holy Sepulchre and the city of Jerusalem from the Saracens, there lived in Flanders a young count by the name of Charles, who, following the impulse of his pious heart, had also gone to fight against the enemies of Christianity. Robert, who was the uncle of Charles and the governor of Flanders, died shortly after the return of his nephew from the Holy Land, and Charles, having been a faithful friend and adviser to his cousin Baldwin, the son of Robert, was appointed to succeed him in the government of Flanders.

Charles, after taking possession of Flanders, become involved in war with the neighboring princes, who were instigated by the widow of his deceased uncle ; but with the assistance of heaven, he succeeded in conquering his enemies without the shedding of much blood, although they had attacked him with greatly superior forces.

The biographer of Charles tells us, that it would be impossible for him to express in words how admirably Charles conducted himself, when he was at last enabled to rule over his possessions in peace. He was devoted to God and obedient to the Church, received in humility every reproach, and endeavored in all things to do his duty. He thanked those who blamed him, and begged them to pray for him, that God might assist him in his efforts to free himself from his sins. He watched carefully over the public welfare, like a true father, and when a great famine visited the land, gave to those who labored in his fields the greater part of his harvest, and issued wise decrees, which greatly relieved the general distress.

Speaking of the time of this great famine, his biographer, says: "The Christian Count sent hundreds of poor persons to his different estates in the country, where they were daily provided for with all that they needed. Whenever he passed through a city or village, crowds of poor people would follow him, among whom he would distribute, with his own hands, provisions, money and clothes, and in this manner he bestowed in one day at Ypern seven thousand eight hundred loaves of bread. It made his heart ache when obliged to dismiss any one, without having in some manner contributed to his relief, and when he had nothing else to give, he would often present the poor with his own clothes.

But in proportion as he was compassionate and benevolent towards the poor, was he severe upon the haughty and the oppressors of the weak. No wonder then that he was hated by the wicked, whose crimes he frustrated. Among his greatest enemies was Bertulf, an imperious nobleman of high rank, who had many obsequious followers on account of his great wealth. His nephew was once engaged in a quarrel with another nobleman, and Bertulf meddling in the affair, attacked the house of the nobleman and entirely destroyed his property. He was in consequence summoned before Charles, in order to justify himself, but he disobeyed the summons ; and knowing that Charles had gone to France, he collected together a band of soldiers, laid waste the country, and committed many robberies and murders.

On his return from France, Charles was informed of what Bertulf had done, and having assembled the barons of the country for the purpose of consulting them about the affair, it was resolved that he should first travel over the country, and see with his own eyes the desolation caused by the wicked Bertulf. The sight of so many pillaged homes and shelterless people—who had been deprived of their possessions by the robbers, affected Charles to such a degree that he was often seen to shed bitter tears.



One morning, after having commenced the day as usual by giving alms to the poor and providing five of them with clothes, he had gone to church and thrown himself on his knees before the altar of the Mother of God, to attend to his devotions, which he generally concluded with the seven penitential psalms. The nephew of Bertulf, who had followed him thither with several of his partisans, succeeded in placing himself behind the Count, and with one violent blow dashed out his brains. The companions of the murderer then commenced to mutilate the body of their pious victim, and one of them cut off the arm, with which Charles had the same morning given alms to a poor woman.

God has given free will to man, so that he can choose between acting justly or unjustly, to be either good or bad; but the execution of his will depends upon God. If a wicked man intends to injure a Christian, God will not permit him to accomplish his designs, unless it be for the benefit of the Christian's soul. Herod desired to kill the child Jesus, and at a later period the Jews attempted the life of the Saviour, but God frustrated all their evil purposes. But when the proper time had come, God permitted His Son to fall into the hands of His enemies, who crucified Him. So it was in the case of Blessed Charles; if it had not been for His benefit to die such a death, God would surely have prevented the murderers from executing their wicked deeds. But such a glorious death crowned the holy and well-spent life of the Christian Count. He died in the midst of his devotions, and fell a victim on account of the justice he was about administering to the enemies of his people.

But though he was glorified by the manner of his death, his murderers were soon obliged to account for the horrible crime which they had committed, and in fact, retribution was near at hand. After the death of Count Charles, Bertulf and his retainers had the whole of Flanders under their sway. A virtuous nobleman, however, by the name of Gervasius, determined to free the country from its oppressors. With but thirty horsemen he suddenly attacked the city of Bruegge, where Bertulf and his band had taken up their residence, and the cowardly tyrants, though much more numerous than the assailing party, sought refuge in the citadel of the city. The citizens soon declared themselves on the side of Gervasius, and put to death within sight of the besieged in the castle, a soldier and a servant, who had been left behind, and also a rich man, called Isaac, because they had participated in the murder of the Count.

The citadel was soon taken by storm, and Bertulf with the rest of his followers fled to the chapel within the castle, the same in which Charles had been murdered. During the night Bertulf tried to escape, but was discovered and dragged by the enraged people to the gallows. Those in the church surrendered, after an obstinate resistance, and were cast into a narrow prison. Twenty-seven of the most guilty were sentenced to be thrown down from a high tower, with their hands tied. "A voice of the people from the city, a voice from the temple, the voice of the Lord that rendereth recompense to his enemies." (Isaiah 66: 6.)

## ST. CUNIGUNDA.

(March 8.)

"Unjust Suspicion"

IN the year one thousand and two, Henry, emperor of Germany, (who, on account of his godly life, has been canonized by the Church) married Cunigunda, daughter of a Count of Luxemburg. She was as virtuous and pious as Henry, and immediately after their marriage had taken place, they made the vow of chastity for life, which they both kept faithfully.

Cunigunda, as well as her husband, manifested her zeal for the honor of God, and for the salvation of her subjects, by establishing the Bishopric of Bamberg, and by the building of churches. Her reputation for sanctity was very great among the people, who related many marvellous tales concerning her. It is said that when the church of St. Stephen was in process of erection in the city of Bamberg, Cunigunda, by the power of her prayers, forced the wicked spirits to break stones for the erection of the church. It is also related that some workmen, who had been hired to work at different hours of the day, demanded in payment for their labors a crystal vase filled with money, which Cunigunda had designed for the church. In order to satisfy them, she proposed that each one of them should put his hand into the vase, and take therefrom as much he wished. This was done, but not one was able to take more than he had honestly earned. A painting, representing this miracle, was until lately visible on one of the walls of the church of St. Stephen.

When the emperor Henry died, he said to his relatives and the Bishops who surrounded his death-bed: "You gave me a virgin as a wife, and as such do I leave her."

After the death of the emperor, Cunigunda delivered up to his successor all the insignia of royalty, and devoted herself entirely to God. In a letter, containing a valuable donation, and directed to a convent she had founded in Kauffungen (near Cassel), she says: "I send you this trifling gift as an alms, and beg that you will pray unceasingly for the soul of my husband, the emperor, for according to St. James, 'the continual prayer of the just man availeth much.'" (Jam. 5: 16.)

After she had spent a year in pious seclusion, she ordered a solemn celebration of the anniversary of her husband's death in the church of the convent above mentioned. After the Gospel of the day had been read, in the presence of the people, she removed the imperial diadem from her brow, and begged the Priest to bless a religious habit that she had made with her own hands. When this ceremony had been performed, her hair was cut off, and she made the monastic vow.

In this convent, where she became a perfect model of virtue and charity, she

remained until her death. Full of innocence and humility, she served all like a servant, and loved all like a mother; she was first in all works of piety, and being greatly skilled in the use of her needle, adorned many altars with embroideries in gold and precious stones. She was dignified and graceful in her deportment, and a most devoted nurse to the sick; and in fact was indefatigable in all works of charity.

During her last illness, perceiving that her attendants were busy making preparations which they considered necessary for a person of her exalted rank, she said to them: "Put away these ornaments, and let me depart from this life without them! Bury this miserable body by the side of my brother and lord, the emperor Henry; I hear him already calling to me—I go now to join him!" In obedience to her wish her body was taken to Bamberg, and placed in the church of St. Stephen, by the side of St. Henry.

St. Cunigunda was canonized one hundred and sixty years after her death by Pope Innocent III. The Bull in which he proclaimed this solemn fact to the Christian world, contains the following passage: "God often glorifies those upon earth whom He has crowned in heaven, by permitting extraordinary things to happen through their intercession; and He testifies that they during life were pleasing in His sight by allowing these wonders to take place before the whole world. And this has been the case with the empress Cunigunda. Her perfect virtue, as well as the truth of the miracles, have been clearly established, after strict investigation. For this reason, therefore, and at the earnest request of many Bishops, I have added the name of the empress Cunigunda to the list of the Saints whom the Catholic Church venerates."

Who would believe that a woman of such great and well-known sanctity should ever have fallen under suspicion, and that her virtue should have been doubted by her own husband, who is himself numbered among the Saints? But it was nevertheless the case.

Some wicked person once told the emperor that a young man had been seen coming early in the morning from the room of the empress. The emperor's suspicion was aroused, and the empress became aware of it. At that time it was customary to make a person suspected of a crime which could not be proved, pass through what was called the ordeal by fire. The suspected person, after appealing to God to make manifest his innocence by permitting him to come forth unscathed, was compelled to walk over twelve red-hot plow-shares. If his feet were burned, he was looked upon as guilty; if he remained unhurt, it was taken as a testimony of his innocence before God. The demand that God should work a miracle, was sinful, and these ordeals were therefore forbidden by a general synod in the year one thousand two hundred and fifteen.

The empress, in the consciousness of her innocence, but not indifferent to the slander, resolved to submit to the fire-ordeal. By the miraculous help of God she stepped upon the red-hot iron without receiving any injury, and the



whole world was convinced of her perfect innocence. The emperor threw himself at her feet, begging her pardon for the wrong he had done her by his unfounded suspicion, and Cunigunda, in the goodness and purity of her Christian heart, forgave him immediately.

The fact of being falsely suspected has sometimes placed the very best Christians in great danger, and has caused them much affliction; but if it is painful for them to be wrongfully accused, how great must be their mortification to see even virtuous people indulging in the wicked custom of spreading evil reports, although they preface their remarks by saying that they do not believe it. To be always suspecting a person is a sin of uncharitableness; for as murder and adultery may be committed in the heart that harbors hatred and impure desires, so false suspicion, conceived in the heart, can not be excused, and is not the less sinful, because it has not been expressed in words.

Man can and must control his thoughts, and if his suspicions are roused, he should consider how often appearances have been deceitful, and should pray to God for him whom he suspects.

If it so happens, dear reader, that like St. Cunigunda you have been wrongfully accused, it is only natural that you should endeavor to justify yourself; but if you are unable to do so, and do not succeed in convincing others of your innocence, do not be cast down. All things are known to God, and you are dearer to Him, because you suffer undeservedly. The day will come when every thing will be known; how great then will be the confusion of the many thousands and millions who have appeared before the world to be better than they were in truth! But what a day of triumph and glory for all who have been unjustly accused, for God will Himself, in the presence of the whole world, pronounce them free from all blame and guilt.

“Blessed are ye when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake; rejoice, and be exceeding glad, because your reward is very great in heaven.” (Matt. 5 : 11, 12.)

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## S T. L U C I U S.

(March 4.)

*"Nothingness of earthly treasures."*

WHEN Christianity began to dawn upon the world, the Roman empire was at the very height of its glory, and was more powerful than any empire had ever been before on earth. She extended her iron arms to the remotest nations, and held them fast in her strong embrace. The Roman emperor, with his formidable armies, appeared to the heathen world like an all-powerful and terrible god. Against this powerful empire, however, a few humble men from the despised country of the Jews directed their efforts. They were without riches, without knowledge, without reputation, without any human assistance; but notwithstanding all these disadvantages they succeeded in conquering this mighty empire. Where the Roman emperors once reigned, there now resides the Pope, who rules over the Catholic Church, and has done so for eighteen centuries.

Among the Popes, whose names have been recorded from St. Peter down to the present Pope Pius IX., we find that of St. Lucius. After the death of Pope Cornelius, who died a martyr, about two hundred and fifty years after Christ, the Christians regarded Lucius as the most worthy to succeed him, on account of his wisdom and piety. Although the descendant of a noble family, and a great scholar, he had become a priest, and did not shrink from the many hardships and persecutions which the priests at that time had to suffer. He not only kept himself free from sin, but endeavored also most zealously to free others from the chains of vice, and to lead them back again to God; but the time given him to labor here below for the honor of God was very short, and after having been put to the rack he suffered martyrdom.

We will give, dear reader, for your edification, an extract from one of the exhortations of St. Lucius to the people, an exhortation the truth of which was fully exemplified by the upright life of this holy martyr:

"All that tempts man, such as gold, honors, power, and the like, is uncertain and deceitful, and is of no real value; but many can be found who worship them in blind passion, and yet their possession causes only trouble and sorrow, awakens envy, and is insufficient to make any one either happy or contented. No one who fixes his heart upon perishable things, stands firm; such a man is driven to and fro, and spends his life in trying to advance his own interests, very often at the expense of others. There can be no pleasure in such a life, and the existence of such a man must after a while become very wearisome. But suppose that a man succeeds in attaining the wealth and distinction which he looks upon as absolutely necessary for happiness; is not all that belongs to earth of short duration, and doomed to perish? And if we could reach the greatest age of man,—if we could live a century,—what would it be, what would

a thousand years be compared with eternity? Therefore, brethren, renounce the temptations of the world, and all that human folly worships; go to God, and strive for the eternal goods of heaven; it is upon heaven that you must fix your hearts. Do not debase yourself by worshipping any thing that belongs to this earth, but preserve the dignity of your soul, and remain true to the God who created you. Look into your soul, know yourself first, in order that you may be enabled to know God. He gives heaven as a home to those who believe in Him, and builds them a dwelling above the sun and stars; there honors are imperishable, joys endless, and peace never-ending. Therefore let us turn with our whole soul from this insignificant and perishable moment of existence to Him who is immeasurable, to Him who is eternal, to Him who is infinitely good and merciful.

“Imagine yourself at the point of death, and call up before the eyes of your mind the dazzling goods of this world: gilded couches, tables covered with costly ornaments, splendid furniture, many servants, honors, crowns, rare perfumes, banquets to which all parts of the world have contributed their most exquisite delicacies—imagine yourself possessed of, and enjoying all these things, then count and review the days of your life, and you will find that the pleasures have taken wings to themselves, that your time has been lost, and that you are in your last moments a miserable and unhappy being.

“Can it be called a Christian way of living when a man places no control over his temper, when he exhibits a stern countenance, and is imperious and disagreeable to those with whom he associates? Is it living like a Christian for a man to fly into a passion on account of an offensive word, or because he has been contradicted? Or for him to be envious at the good fortune of another, and to rejoice in any evil that may befall a fellow-creature? Is it not more like death than life, when the rich in their splendid dwellings continually tremble for fear that some misfortune may deprive them of their earthly treasures? Or do those really live, whose souls are in a constant state of agitation and indecision, who fear to commence any thing, and who repent after commencing; who have neither the strength to suffer nor to struggle; who continually break their resolutions, and who in their wretchedness at last become disgusted with life and tired of the world? Verily, all who are the prey of such evil passions, can be justly looked upon as dead.

“Let us, therefore, for the sake of our eternal welfare, renounce the pleasures of the world and its riches. The necessities of life are but few, and the wants of the body easily satisfied; what good, then, results from leading a luxurious life, if it is of such short duration? For we are only pilgrims upon earth, our home being in heaven. Let us, therefore, overcome our faults, to which we have yielded long enough, and return to the right road, to Jesus Christ, who will never lead us astray. He who walks resolutely in this path,



meets with no stumbling block. See, He invites us to serve in His cause, and the reward He promises to His followers is great and glorious. If we follow Him, we shall not do so in vain; for all obstacles will be vanquished, and we shall rise from servitude to power, and from bondage to freedom everlasting."

The mortal remains of St. Lucius are preserved for veneration in the church of St. Cecilia in Rome. Imagine yourself standing before the remains of this holy Pope, and reflect on the truths contained in his words, cited above. All his sacrifices, troubles, pains, and sufferings on earth, his torture and martyrdom, have passed away for ever; but his happiness in heaven, so much greater on account of what he suffered, will last for ever. Every pain and trouble, every sacrifice for the sake of God will be richly rewarded, for "they that sow in tears, shall reap in joy." (Ps. 125 : 5.) For what then strive you? for earthly pleasures and earthly possessions, or for virtue and the kingdom of God?

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## ST. GERASIMUS.

(March .5.)

"Fidelity to Christ"

ST. GERASIMUS lived in the fifth century and was an inmate of a convent in Palestine. Walking one day on the banks of the Jordan, he met a lion who was roaring with pain on account of a thorn which had become fastened in his foot. He approached the Saint and held up his foot towards him, as if imploring his assistance. St. Gerasimus took out the thorn, cleansed the wound, which had already commenced to suppurate, wrapped his handkerchief about it, and then rose to continue his walk. The lion, however, feeling himself greatly relieved, would not leave his benefactor, and from that moment followed him everywhere like a dog.

Astonished at the gratitude manifested by this wild beast, St. Gerasimus kept the lion during the remainder of his life, and provided him daily with food.

At the time of the death and burial of the Saint, the lion happened accidentally to be absent from the convent, and when he returned and did not find his benefactor, he refused to touch the food placed before him by the monks. They tried in vain to quiet him by caresses, but he went about seeking for his master, and by his cries and actions exhibited the grief he felt. At last the Abbot led him to the grave of St. Gerasimus, and when he saw the Abbot in tears kneel down and pray, he also threw himself upon the grave, struck the

ground with his head, and never again left the grave, by the side of which he soon after died of grief.

We here see an instance of a creature, belonging to the most ferocious of animals, and one whose nature it is not to exhibit love to other creatures, showing his love to St. Gerasimus, because he had relieved him from pain; and we see that the feeling of gratitude alone had power to change a savage beast into a gentle and faithful creature. Reflect, O Christian, and see if some one has not relieved you from a thorn, healed your wounds, saved you from death, or rather from everlasting torments!

Reflect, and you will find, that Christ has done for you, what St. Gerasimus did for the lion. In a spiritual sense you too have been a lion, that is, you were naturally inclined to evil. The thorn of sin was fastened in your soul, which would have caused your eternal damnation, and you could have helped yourself as little as did the lion, if God had not come to your assistance. He sent His only-begotten Son to heal and cleanse the wounds of your soul with the water of holy baptism. He was obliged to do more to relieve your sufferings than St. Gerasimus did to ease the pain of the lion. For your sake the Saviour died a cruel death upon the cross; but ask yourself if you are grateful to Him as was the lion to St. Gerasimus? Are you thankful for the life He has given you? Do you seek and love Him, and are you attached and faithful to Him?

It may be said in truth: "All who know Christ and do not love Him with their whole heart, are more ungrateful than the lion of whom we have just spoken." The Apostle Paul says, therefore: "If any man love not our Lord Jesus Christ, let him be anathema." (1 Cor. 16 : 22.)

All the Saints have been penetrated with a burning love for Christ; and inspired with such a love, the Apostle Paul exclaims: "For I am sure that neither death, nor life, nor Angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor might, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." (Rom. 8 : 38, 39.)

Where such an ardent love prevails, it manifests itself by the willing sacrifice of all that is most dear to the heart; for even the lion of whom we have spoken, gave up his home in the desert, and his free, roaming life, so that he might remain with his benefactor. We see the same thing done by St. Gerasimus. He renounced the world and all that is agreeable to man, in order to devote himself in solitude to the service of Christ. When others joined him with the same intention, he made a rule that each one must pass five days in the week alone in his cell, refrain from conversing, and live on bread, dates, and water. On Saturday and Sunday, however, they united in the worship of God, and dined together.

It sometimes so happens, that men who lead a self-denying and pious life,

are nevertheless possessed with a spirit of haughtiness, and on that account can not truly love and serve God. There lived in the time of St. Gerasimus an Abbot by the name of Eutyches, who, notwithstanding his rigid manner of living, his fasting, watching, and spiritual exercises, asserted the doctrine that Christ possessed but one nature, and that His body was not of the same substance as ours. A Synod declared this doctrine to be false, since Christ united in His person the divine and human nature. Nevertheless Eutyches persisted in His erroneous opinion, and strove to propagate it as a true doctrine; for the spirit of pride prevailing in him, prevented him from acknowledging and recanting his error. St. Gerasimus and his brethren also embraced the false doctrine before it had been condemned by the Church. But the true spirit of love and fidelity to the Church, which filled the heart of Gerasimus, soon manifested itself; for instead of persisting in his opinion, he consulted the celebrated Abbot Euthymius in reference to the true doctrine of the Church, and having been shown his error, he acknowledged and confessed it, and returned with a repenting heart to his spiritual brethren.

“Humiliation followeth the proud: and glory shall uphold the humble of spirit.” (Proverbs 29 : 23.)

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## ST. FRIDOLIN.

(March 6.)

“Fruits of Perseverance.”

ST. FRIDOLIN was the descendant of a wealthy and noble family in Ireland, and lived about five hundred years after Christ. It was the ardent desire of his heart to serve God, and he therefore devoted himself to the service of the Church. He visited different parts of his native country, preaching the word of God wherever he went, in order to strengthen and develop the growth of Christianity, which even at that time had begun to spread its light over Ireland. On account of his holy life, distinguished birth, and his zeal and power of proclaiming the Gospel, he was everywhere received with great love and reverence. St. Fridolin, however, was not satisfied with what he had done; he wished to enlarge his sphere of action, to do more for the cause of Christ, and he therefore resolved to propagate the Catholic religion among the heathen. Neither the urgent solicitations of his relatives and friends, nor the great love he felt for his country, were sufficient to divert him from his purpose, and after having



given all his earthly possessions to the poor, he set out to accomplish his pious designs.

We will pass over what is related to us concerning his passage to France, his labors in that country, his appointment as Abbot of a convent by the Bishop of Poitiers, who had shown him much love and esteem, his success with King Clovis of France, whose assistance he had implored in union with the Bishop for the erection of the church of St. Hilary, and the visible blessings granted by God upon all his undertakings in that country.

After St. Fridolin had for some time administered the affairs of the convent and cathedral of St. Hilary, in the city of Poitiers, the Saint one night appeared to him in a vision, and told him that he should renounce the management of the convent, and go to Allemania (the country of Swabia), and there remain the rest of his life, and that he should promote the kingdom of God on an island in the river Rhine.

To the infinite regret of the Bishop, the members of the convent, and the inhabitants of Poitiers, St. Fridolin declared his intention of leaving the city for Allemania, in obedience to the wish of St. Hilary. After a long and fatiguing journey through Switzerland, and after a tedious search for the island pointed out to him in his vision, he came to the place where now stands the town of Säckingen. He recognized the spot as the island where he was to spend the remainder of his days. It was a wild desert, used as a pasture-ground by the people who lived on the banks of the Rhine. Fridolin walked all over the island to select a place for the building of a church; but the inhabitants of the neighborhood perceiving this, looked upon him as a vagabond and thief, who intended to steal their cattle; and not listening to his excuses, they shamefully abused him, and drove him away.

Fridolin's repeated attempts to establish himself on the island were each time frustrated by the hostility of the neighboring people, and he was at last obliged to apply to King Clovis, to whose dominions Swabia at that time belonged. The king presented him with the island, and furnished him with a document according to which every one, under pain of death, was forbidden from placing any obstacle in the way of St. Fridolin's taking possession of the island. Thus provided, Fridolin returned to Swabia, accompanied by the disciples who had joined him.

The island being still in an uninhabitable condition, St. Fridolin and his companions were received in the house of a man named Wachter, who lived near the island, although his wife had strongly objected to his receiving them. Shortly after their arrival she was delivered of a daughter, and her husband asked St. Fridolin to become godfather to the child. The mother felt very indignant that a poor stranger should be chosen as the godfather of her daughter; but the more she became acquainted with St. Fridolin, the more did her antipathy to him change into respect and confidence, so that, finally, she requested

him to instruct and educate her daughter. And this child, in fact, was the first to enter the convent for nuns, which Fridolin at a later period founded on the island, her parents contributing a large part of their possessions to assist the holy man in his benevolent designs.

After the wood-land had been cleared, and the island made inhabitable, St. Fridolin built a church, and connected therewith a convent for such persons as were willing to live according to the spirit of Christ, and to work in the service of the Church. By the power of his teaching and example, and by a rigid discipline, he strove to kindle in those belonging to the convent a spirit of true piety and virtue. He was himself the heart and soul of the pious community, and his convent and church were places of great edification. No wonder then, that many not only went thither on a pilgrimage, but that many should also settle there; and thus was laid the foundation of the present town of Sækingen, where the memory of St. Fridolin is still cherished and venerated. The convent which the Saint established, was the first ever founded in the country of Swabia, and it became the nursery from whence the Christian religion was spread over the Black Forest, and other parts of Baden and Wurtemberg.

St. Fridolin accomplished great and enduring things. Large regions and numberless persons are indebted to him for the possession of the greatest treasure—the belief in Christ. Although thirteen hundred years have passed away since he labored on earth, he is still loved and venerated by the people of Swabia.

The life of St. Fridolin in all its bearings, the many sacrifices he made, the trials he underwent, the perseverance he at all times manifested, show plainly that nothing good can be accomplished without great sacrifice and perseverance. We should therefore be convinced of the truth that it is impossible to gain heaven without making persevering efforts to do so, and without making sacrifices of some kind.

“The sacrifice of the just is acceptable, and the Lord will not forget the memorial thereof.” (Ecclesiasticus 35 : 9.)

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## SS. PERPETUA AND FELICITAS.

(March 7.)

"Paradise."

ST. AUGUSTIN, the great doctor of the Church, ranks these two holy women, whose names are mentioned in every Mass, among the greatest Saints who ever suffered martyrdom.

They were imprisoned on account of their belief in Jesus Christ, during a persecution of the Christians which occurred two hundred years after Christ, in that part of Africa now called Algiers, but which at that time was a Roman province. Both were young married women. Perpetua had shortly before her imprisonment been delivered of a child, and Felicitas hourly expected her confinement.

The father of Perpetua, an old heathen, hearing that his daughter had been imprisoned, followed her thither and asked her why she had caused this disgrace to fall upon her family. She told him that she was a Christian and that she was determined to remain one; upon hearing which he abused her cruelly and left her in anger.

When brought into the presence of the judge, Perpetua, with the rest of the Christians, firmly refused to worship the idols, and openly declared her fidelity to Christ, whereupon they were all cast into a gloomy prison. A few days after, her father came again to see her, and sought to move her, saying: "My daughter, I beseech you have pity on my gray hairs, and disgrace me not before the world. Think of your mother, of your brothers, and of your own child, that can not live without you;"—and covering her hands with his kisses, he threw himself down at her feet and wept bitterly. Perpetua, though moved to tears, and with her heart filled with the most tender love to her father, yielded not to his intreaties, but remained faithful to her convictions.

The next day the Christians were once more brought before the tribunal, and the judge admonished Felicitas especially to spare her life, on account of her delicate condition. Felicitas replied: "I know my duty as a Christian, and you can not persuade me to sacrifice before the idols." Perpetua made the same declaration, although her maternal heart suffered infinite pain at the sight of her little child, that had been brought by her father, in order to overcome her resolution. The judge then sentenced the two women to be thrown into the arena, there to be devoured by wild beasts, on the seventh day of March, on which day a festival was to be celebrated.

On the appointed day a wild animal was let loose upon the two martyrs, whose behavior in the midst of their great suffering was so sublime, that the heathens, though accustomed to such cruel spectacles, were moved to pity, and demanded that no other wild beasts should be let loose against the two women,



but that they should be beheaded by the executioner. At the approach of the latter Perpetua and Felicitas kissed each other, and received the fatal stroke in silence.

Several other Christians who had been sentenced to death, were in the same prison with Perpetua and Felicitas, and one of them, Saturus, had a vision, which he thus described: "Our sufferings being at an end and having been delivered out of our bodies, we were conducted towards heaven. It seemed as though we were ascending a hill, and when we had passed the first orb of the universe, we saw an immense light. I said to Perpetua, who was by my side: 'There is what the Lord has promised us; now the promise is fulfilled.' And being carried by four angels, we came to a large place that looked like a garden, full of rose-trees and all kinds of flowers. In the garden were four other angels, still more beautiful than those who had accompanied us thither. When they perceived us, they showed us honor, and said to each other in astonishment: 'Behold, they have come; behold, they have come!' The four angels who had carried us thus far, now placed us gently on the ground, and we followed on foot a broad road, where we met Jucundus, Saturnius, and Artaxius, who had been burned alive during the same persecution, and Quintus, who had died in the prison. We inquired for the others, but the angels said to us: 'Come, enter first here, and salute the Lord!'

"We then came to a place, the walls of which were built of pure light, and before its entrance stood four angels, who provided those who entered with white garments. We entered and heard the unceasing exclamation of 'Holy, Holy, Holy! We saw one sitting there, whose hair was like shining silver, and whose countenance was like that of a youth: but his feet we saw not, and on his right and left stood four angels, and others behind them. We approached the throne, when four angels raised us up, and we kissed him. The angels then told us: 'Go and rejoice!' And I said to Perpetua: 'You now possess what you have always desired.' She replied: 'Thanks be to God! I was happy during my earthly life, but I am now still more so.' We then went out and met many other brethren, who had also suffered martyrdom. We felt ourselves in the enjoyment of bliss, and were filled with a sweet happiness beyond the power of description."

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## ST. JOHN OF GOD.

(March 8.)

"God's Blessing."

ST. JOHN received his first instruction in the Christian religion from his parents, who lived in a small town in the kingdom of Portugal. He was nine years old when a Religious, who was passing through the town, called to see his parents, and told them many things about the beautiful churches in the capital of Spain and of the piety that prevailed there. His words made such an impression on the youthful John, that in order to satisfy his curiosity, he secretly left the paternal roof, and accompanied the Religious to Madrid. The mother grieved herself to death at the loss of her little son, and the father entered the order of St. Francis.

The Religious who had been so forgetful of his holy duties as to take the child from his father's house, was cruel enough also to abandon him while passing through a Spanish village without giving himself any further care on his account. An honest and wealthy shepherd, however, had pity on the forsaken boy, and gave him employment. In the course of a few years he made him his overseer, and regarded him with such favor that he offered him his daughter in marriage. John refused the offer, but his master continuing to importune him upon the subject, he left his service and became a soldier.

The Spaniards at that time were at war with the French, and had laid siege to the city of Fontarabia, John being among the besiegers. He now became negligent and forgetful of his duties as a Christian, and contracted the bad habits of a camp-life. Once, while going on a foraging expedition to a village not far from the French camp, John rode a horse that had shortly before been captured from the French, and the animal recognizing the camp commenced galloping towards it, in spite of John's efforts to restrain him. The horse at last threw him so violently against a stone, that he remained senseless for some time, and was in great danger of being taken prisoner by the French. While in this critical situation, he implored the Mother of God to deliver him from his peril, and after having offered up the prayer, he felt himself so much stronger that he determined to return to the Spanish camp, which he succeeded in doing. This occurrence caused him to reflect upon the careless and unchristian life he was leading, and he resolved to become a better man. Another misfortune, however, awaited him; his captain had given him several valuable articles for safekeeping, and they had been stolen from him, and the captain accused John of having himself committed the theft. Not being able to prove his innocence, he was sentenced to be hanged, and only after much difficulty did his friends succeed in obtaining his pardon, but he was dismissed from the army.

John returned to his former master in the village of Oropesa, who received

him with much kindness, and employed him again as overseer, but having renewed his offer in regard to his daughter, John again quitted his service. At that time the king was at war with the Turks, and John thought that he could not please God in a better manner, than to fight against the enemies of Christianity. During this campaign, however, he remained faithful to his Christian duties, and advanced daily in the knowledge and fear of God.

At the close of the war, when the troops were disbanded, John returned to Portugal in search of his parents, but they having died he went back to Spain, and found employment as a shepherd in the service of a wealthy woman. While occupied in guarding the sheep from all dangers, a more noble desire made itself felt in his heart, the desire of directing his care and attention to the immortal soul of man. With this purpose he determined to cross over into Africa, and having providentially met a nobleman who, with his wife and four children, had been exiled to that country, he accompanied them thither as their servant.

The family were already much afflicted at their banishment, but became more so when they were all taken dangerously ill in consequence of the injurious climate of Africa. The sickness having consumed all that they had been able to save from the wreck of their property, they found themselves reduced to the greatest poverty, and their whole reliance now rested upon their faithful servant John. The nobleman, therefore, acquainted him with their wretched condition, and bitterly lamented that his wife and children, who had been reared in wealth and luxury should now be left destitute of the common necessities of life: He told John that it was in his power to relieve the wants of the family if he would be willing to work upon the fortifications of Ceuta, and employ his wages in assisting to support them. John cheerfully consented to this plan, and every evening brought his earnings to the family, and once, when the work had been interrupted for two days, sold his clothes in order to procure food for the children.

With this most beautiful action of John's began a new epoch in his life: and we shall see that God, who rewards the giving of the smallest gift, if bestowed in His name, did not permit this noble deed of the faithful and self-sacrificing servant to pass unrewarded.

Some time afterwards, the Confessor of John thought it his duty to advise his return to Spain. He followed the counsel given him, and while in Grenada, during the celebration of the festival of St. Sebastian, he heard from the lips of the distinguished preacher, John Avila, the remark: "That it was far better to die than to offend the divine majesty of God by the commission of sin."

These words made such an impression upon John, that, after leaving the church, he began in a loud voice to implore God to have mercy on him, tore his hair, and acted so strangely in the public street, that the people looked upon him as a madman, and had him conveyed to a hospital. There he remained for some time, and was often harshly treated; but the keepers, perceiving that he



was not crazy, permitted him to wander through the hospital. The only use he made of his liberty was to wait upon the sick. He had made a solemn promise to serve Christ by serving the poor, and in order to fulfill his vow, he left the hospital. Having no means of his own to carry out his charitable designs, he commenced to gather wood and to sell it in the city of Grenada, the proceeds of which he employed for the poor. Passing daily through the streets of the city afforded him an opportunity of seeing the great misery and want among the inhabitants, so that his whole mind was given to the consideration of the best means of remedying the evil. Assisted by some benevolent people he succeeded in renting a house for the reception of the sick and afflicted, and for persons in reduced circumstances.

He was every day seen going through the city, provided with a basket and two large pots, and crying out: "Brethren, be charitable for the sake of God,"—and knowing for whom he was working, and convinced that he was a holy man, the inhabitants brought him money, clothing, and provisions, but before distributing what he had collected among the poor, he always exhorted them to pray for their benefactors. As the number of those who found an asylum with him was daily increasing, he succeeded in procuring a more spacious building, and the assistance of persons who shared with him the labor of his sacred but difficult mission. From the rich contributions, which now came pouring in from all sides, he was enabled not only to provide for the sick and infirm, but also to support the poor widows and orphans of noblemen, to be charitable towards disbanded soldiers, and to assist farmers who had suffered in consequence of the failure of their crops.

Although John was greatly fatigued by his daily work, he never omitted to visit all his sick, and to inquire after their condition and wants, before returning to his own rest. Every night he would give a portion of what he had collected to the poor who assembled before the house, and who were ashamed to beg in the day-time. Careful and indefatigable as John proved to be in regard to the bodily comforts of the inmates of his asylum, he was equally zealous for their spiritual welfare.

In consequence of his holiness of life, a Bishop ennobled his name by adding to it the simple words "of God," so that ever afterwards he was called "John of God."

The example given by this Saint was so admirable, that persons of the highest rank were in the habit of visiting his hospital in order that they might assist in nursing the sick. Princes and Bishops bestowed upon him large sums, so that his work was continued and imitated in many other places. The disciples who had united with him continued to labor in the same spirit after the death of their beloved master, and founded a society which has received his name. St. John ended his days in a manner worthy of one who had always evinced such a spirit of self-sacrifice. The river Xenil, near Grenada, had be-

come much swollen by constant rains, and had carried off large quantities of drift-wood; John seized upon this opportunity to provide himself with wood for his poor, and while in the performance of this labor caught a severe cold. He nevertheless rushed again into the water to save a boy who had fallen in, and was on the point of being drowned. His cold in consequence became much worse, and when in the fifty-fifth year of his age, God called him to receive his reward.

“A wise man shall inherit honor among his people, and his name shall live for ever.” (Ecclesiasticus, 37 : 29.)

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## ST. CATHARINE OF BOLOGNA.

(March 9.)

“The Spirit of Christ”

IN the city of Bologna, in Italy, there is a church near the convent of Santa Clara, and on the altar of that church, behind a glass case, can be seen the figure of a woman seated, dressed in a gray habit. Her face, hands, and feet are uncovered, and though very pale, are as perfect as those of a living person. This figure is the real body of St. Catharine, which has remained uncorrupted even until the present day, although four hundred years have passed away since her trials upon earth were ended.

Catharine belonged to a pious and noble family, and when in her twelfth year, received the appointment of maid-of-honor to the daughter of her sovereign. The rare prudence, great modesty, and charming grace of the child, clearly presaged her later excellence as a woman.

While at the princely court, Catharine enjoyed all that could make a worldly-minded person happy—but such a life could never satisfy her, and her heart despising the empty pomps and vanities of the world, longed for the quiet and solitude of a religious life. The death of the princess, which occurred two or three years after her appointment, afforded Catharine an opportunity to retire from the court, and with the consent of her mother, she soon after entered a convent, and received the veil.

Her kindness, humility, and obedience to her new friends, soon gained her all hearts; and never having been interested in worldly affairs, her soul was filled with the love of God. She never uttered a vain word, or said any thing that could give offense to a fellow-creature; and as the Vestal Virgins among the Romans were obliged to keep a fire always burning in the temple before the

goddess Vesta, so also did the Christian Virgin Catharine keep alive in the sanctuary of her heart a burning love for her divine Lord and Master.

After some years she was chosen Abbess of the convent, and when once asked how it was possible that, though constantly occupied with the many important affairs of her station, she always found time to attend to her devotions, she replied: "My soul is accustomed to abide with God, so that in all places and at all times my thoughts are collected, and I can easily offer up my prayers to Him."

Catharine was distinguished for her great humility, and voluntarily took upon herself the most menial services in the convent; and when sometimes undeservedly censured, she submitted patiently to the reproach, and never attempted to justify herself. When elected Abbess, she grieved so much at her promotion that she burst into tears, and fell dangerously ill. She refused to accept the office until convinced that it was the will of God for her to do so.

Like many other Saints, Catharine denied herself all comfort in dress and luxury in food; but instead of entering into full details of her life, we propose to speak to you upon the blessed effects of her holy example.

The Gospel says: "If any man has not the spirit of Christ, he is none of his." (Romans 8 : 9.) But how does this spirit manifest itself? What we have related of St. Catharine is in itself no certain sign that she possessed this spirit, for many persons who are not even Christians exercise the virtue of self-denial; but if the spirit of Christ is living in us, it will manifest itself in the love we bear one to the other. What is most distinctly seen in the incarnation, life, teachings, and sufferings of the Saviour, is His great love for the salvation of man; a love which made Him leave heaven, and descend into the depths of our human misery, in order that we might be saved. St. Paul says: "And I live, now not I; but Christ liveth in me. And that I live now in the flesh: I live in the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and delivered himself for me." (Galatians 2 : 20.)

The spirit which is not satisfied with the mere giving of alms, but is ready even to sacrifice life for the salvation of others, manifested itself on more than one occasion in the life of St. Catharine. She always felt the greatest solicitude and compassion for sinners. She included them in her prayers, and begged Almighty God to inflict upon her the torments of the damned, if the souls of others could be saved by her sufferings. As Abbess, she loved the nuns under her charge with the affection of a mother, had the greatest patience with their faults, prayed for them with her whole soul, and served them as if they had been her superiors. One of the nuns was subjected to grievous temptations, and in her distress despaired of being able to remain in the convent. Catharine having perceived her struggles, sent for her, and said: "Dear sister, let me comfort you. Be faithful to the religious life you have entered upon, and strive courageously to overcome the temptations of the evil one who assails you."



I am willing to suffer the pains of purgatory until the judgment day, in order to atone for your sins." The nun was deeply touched by the devout love of her spiritual mother, and recommended herself to her powerful prayers. She remained in the convent, and at a later period was chosen Abbess; but always ascribed the victory she obtained over the devil to the great love borne her by St. Catharine.

A certain criminal was condemned to be executed, but instead of confessing and repenting of his sins, he prayed to the devil for help. When Catharine heard of what he had done, she felt her heart pierced with grief. She spent the whole night before the most blessed Sacrament of the Altar in the chapel of the convent, praying fervently and weeping bitter tears.

"My God and my Lord," was her prayer, "I will not rise from my knees until Thou hast granted me the soul for whom Thou didst shed Thy own most precious blood. My Lord, do not refuse what I ask of Thee, although unworthy to have my petition granted. Hear my voice, O God!" Her prayer was heard, for early in the morning she was informed that the criminal had sent for the confessor of the convent, and in a truly contrite spirit had made his confession, manifesting a deep sorrow for his sins.

Be convinced, dear reader, that the corrupt, the envious, the scoffer, and the mischief-maker is not only without the spirit of Christ, but is possessed with that of the devil, who delights in every species of mischief. As long as you take no interest in the salvation of others, you show that the spirit of Christ is not in you. You have frequent opportunities offered you of keeping others from sinning, and of animating them to do right, either by means of advice, command, prayer, or admonition. If you have hitherto been negligent in the exercise of this duty, be more watchful and active for the future; but if you have been zealous in laboring for the salvation of others, let your zeal be increased. It would be well for you to meditate upon the words of St. Catharine: "He who does not possess love, possesses nothing, and lives in the darkness and gloom of death."

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## THE FORTY CHRISTIAN KNIGHTS.

(March 10.)

"Power of Faith"

THREE hundred years after Christ, a new persecution against the Christians was ordered throughout the Roman empire. The emperor at that time had a large army in Armenia. Belonging to the Twelfth Legion were forty soldiers, who by their pure and holy lives gave evidence of having been converted to Christ. In fulfilling their duties as Christians, they did not neglect their obligations to the emperor; and they were distinguished in the army not only for their fine physical condition and strength, but also for their valor and military skill.

When the decree of the emperor, that "every soldier must offer sacrifice to the gods as a proof of his not being a Christian," was read aloud before the Twelfth Legion, these forty soldiers stepped forth from the ranks, declared themselves Christians, and refused to show divine honor to the idols. They were immediately taken before the judge, and commanded to submit to the order of the emperor; but they replied that no punishment, however severe, could ever induce them to renounce their holy faith. The judge promised and threatened them in vain. He then had them cruelly scourged, their flesh pierced with iron hooks, and afterwards cast them into prison until the arrival of the commanding officer, who, upon hearing of their repeated refusals to comply with the imperial order, sentenced them to be exposed to the cold until they should be frozen to death.

The great severity of the winter season in Armenia had influenced the officer to pronounce so cruel and unheard-of a sentence, he believing that the horrors of such a death would overcome the faith of the forty heroes; but they undauntedly marched to the place of their martyrdom, and joyfully exposed their naked bodies to the piercing cold and raging north winds. The heathens had purposely chosen a place for their execution near the public baths, where warm rooms and warm water were always kept ready, and the Christians had been told that they might enter and escape their sufferings, if they would only consent to deny Christ. According to the testimony of St. Gregory of Nyssa, their resolution never wavered for a moment, although death crept but slowly from limb to limb until it finally reached their vital parts. Their indescribable agonies lasted for three days, but they exhorted one another to remain faithful, and prayed that God might keep their whole number united, which He did, although in a manner different from their expectations.

There were soldiers stationed in the public baths, who were ordered to open the doors to any one of the forty who would declare his willingness to worship the idols. One of these heathen soldiers saw in the night a dazzling light

shining directly over the forty martyrs, and brilliant crowns descending from heaven upon their heads; but he only could see thirty-nine crowns. The reason why there were not forty was soon explained. One of the sufferers imagined that he could no longer endure the biting cold, and therefore ran towards the public baths, intending to deny his religion; but he had scarcely arrived there, when he fell dead, losing thus, by his apostasy, not only his temporal, but his eternal life. The grace rejected by this faithless man was not, however, lost. The soldier who had witnessed not only the glorious vision mentioned above, but also the death of the apostate, felt his heart miraculously changed; and throwing off his clothes he joined the martyrs, exclaiming: "I, too, am a Christian!" And then prayed aloud: "My Lord and my God, I believe in Thee, whom these Thy true servants have confessed. Accept me also, O Lord! Let me be numbered among them, and make me worthy to suffer for Thee." Penetrated with joy that their number was again complete, the martyrs all gave praise to God.

When they were all frozen to death, the executioner came with a wagon to carry their bodies away in order to burn them; but Meliton, the youngest of the martyrs, still showed signs of life. The heathens imagined that he might be induced to deny Christ while in this state, and he was not therefore placed in the wagon with the others. His mother, a poor widow, seeing that they wished to spare her son, approached him, and found that life was not yet extinct, and that his eyes, rapidly growing dim in death, proved that he suffered the most excruciating pains.

We can imagine what the heart of his mother felt at this sad sight. But what did she do? She exhorted her son to remain faithful to the end, and when he had expired, she placed him with her own hands with the rest of the other martyrs, whose bodies were to be burned upon a funeral pile. She shed no tear, uttered no word of despair or sorrow, but followed the mournful procession with a countenance radiant with joy, and as if the executioner's wagon had been her son's triumphal car.

Behold the power of faith! The sensual man sees but *one* world before him—the earth. What he loves and struggles to obtain, what he fears and avoids, is confined to the narrow compass of the world in which he lives. If he occasionally thinks of God and eternity, they appear to him as something so far distant and so indistinct, that he ceases to meditate upon them. Without a living faith, the forty soldiers would have regarded life, honor, and the command of their emperor as infinitely more precious than either heaven or hell; and the poor widow would have rather carried her son home, in order to restore him to life, than to send him to feed the flames of a funeral pile. The man, on the contrary, who is inspired with a living faith, knows and sees before him *two* worlds. His spirit discerns a world much greater than the one which he inhabits, and the joys and attractions of earth bear the same comparison to



the felicities of heaven, as does a dew-drop hanging from a spider's web, to the vast ocean. The faithful Christian will therefore gladly sacrifice earthly possessions, honor, and even life itself, in order to attain everlasting happiness. Of such heroes of faith does the Apostle speak when he says: "Others were racked, not accepting deliverance, that they might find a better resurrection." (Hebrews 11 : 35.) These persons regarded the salvation of their souls more than they did the perishable joys of this world, and in doing so they showed their wisdom. Those of little faith, on the contrary, who live only for the pleasures of this life, resemble the madman who treasures a piece of broken glass as though it were a priceless jewel. In faith alone is true wisdom, love, strength, and hope. Faith is the root of all virtue and happiness. Therefore, dear reader, keep your faith burning brightly, pray daily that the eyes of your mind may be opened, and that you may more clearly comprehend the eternal truths of your holy religion. Implore Almighty God to strengthen your faith, and nourish it yourself by reading good books, by listening to Christian instruction, and by meditating upon the word of God. For all time, and to all persons, are addressed the words: "Amen, amen, I say unto you: He that believeth in me, hath everlasting life." (John 6 : 47.)

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## ST. EULOGIUS.

(March 11.)

*'Conflict of duties.'*

WHEN, after the descent of the Holy Ghost, the Apostles commenced to preach in Jerusalem the Gospel of Christ, they were commanded, under pain of the severest penalties, to desist from teaching their strange doctrine to the people; but when, in defiance of threats, they continued their efforts to spread the kingdom of God, they received a summons to appear before the council. In answer to the questions put to them, they answered: "We ought to obey God rather than man." (Acts 5 : 29.)

The same alternative of obeying either God or man is offered to each one of us. We owe obedience to our parents, to the authorities, and to our employers, for it is the express command and will of God that we should obey our superiors, but when our parents or superiors wish us to do any thing that is clearly in opposition to the will of God, and forbid that which He commands, then are we obliged, under pain of offending God, to do His will, not caring for the consequences which may result from our having provoked the anger of man.

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The life of the Saint whose blessed memory we commemorate to-day, offers a beautiful example for imitation to the Christian whose duties sometimes are of a conflicting nature.

St. Eulogius lived about one thousand years ago in a part of Spain which was at that time in possession of the Moors. He was distinguished in his youth by his truly Christian manner of living, and by a most laudable perseverance in the attainment of knowledge. When he had reached the proper age, he was elevated to the dignity of the priesthood and was appointed a professor of theology.

The Christians in Spain were obliged to suffer many persecutions from the Moors, and Eulogius did not escape the fate of his brethren in Christ, and he too was for some time imprisoned. After the death of the Bishop of Toledo, Eulogius, as "the most worthy," was appointed to succeed him; but before his consecration could take place he was elevated to a higher dignity, and instead of the mitre, the glorious crown of martyrdom was placed upon his head.

The Moorish king, Aberama, in whose reign Eulogius had been cruelly persecuted, died, and was succeeded by Mohammed, who hated Christians to such a degree that he resolved to put them to death wherever he could find them. During the persecution under this king, many Christians, desirous of becoming martyrs, appeared before the Moorish judges, and accused themselves of being Christians; in consequence of which a council assembled in Cordova, and forbade the Christians to sacrifice their lives so uselessly. Others there were who in obedience to duty, unhesitatingly confessed their faith, when interrogated upon the subject—but there were many also who denied Christ, for fear of the punishment of man.

Just as the persecution was at its height, Leocritia, the daughter of a noble Moorish family, was, without the knowledge of her family, secretly instructed in the principles of Christianity by one of her relatives. With her years increased also her faith in and love for Christ; so that she found it impossible to conceal her conversion any longer from her parents.

All the threats and prayers they used to induce her to renounce her holy faith, proved fruitless; but fearing that constant ill-treatment from her parents might cause her, in a moment of weakness, to waver in her good resolutions, she determined to escape from her father's house. She informed St. Eulogius of her pitiful condition, and of her desire to reach some secure place where she might live as a Christian. Eulogius was deeply touched by the sufferings of the helpless maiden, and he did all in his power to comfort and assist her in her affliction. The celebration of a wedding in the family soon gave her an opportunity to put her plan in execution; and having escaped from the house, she fled to St. Eulogius, who received her most kindly, and assisted by other faithful Christians he succeeded in concealing her for some time. The enraged parents made every effort to discover the retreat of their lost daughter, and in

compliance with their request, the magistrates determined to search the houses of those who were suspected of being Christians. Eulogius found it necessary, therefore, in order to save her from falling into the hands of the cruel Moors, to constantly change her place of concealment; and he prayed most fervently that Almighty God would deliver this tender lamb from the jaws of the ravenous wolves. But the ways of God are inscrutable, and it pleased Him that the poor child should be found secreted in the house of Eulogius, whither she had just been brought. Both were accordingly taken before the judge, in whose presence Eulogius confessed himself a Christian, and said: "It is my duty, as a priest of God, to show the light of faith to all who seek for it, and to refuse the means of grace to none who desire to walk in the pathway of life. This virgin manifested a great love for Christ and desired to be fully instructed in the Catholic religion; as a servant of Jesus Christ I was not permitted to deny her request, and I, therefore, have taught her the truths of our holy faith."

One of the judges tried to prevail upon Eulogius to make a pretense at least of renouncing the Christian religion, but he, instead of following the advice given him, offered to instruct the judge in the doctrines of the Catholic Church: whereupon he was sentenced to be beheaded.

The firmness of St. Eulogius did not proceed from obstinacy and stubbornness, but from the conviction that he owed a greater obedience to God than to man; and this he proved on his way to the place of execution, where he showed himself to be a true disciple of his Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, who has said: "Take up my yoke upon you, and learn of me, because I am meek and humble of heart, and you shall find rest to your souls." (Matt 11: 29.)

A servant of the king, who had followed him, struck him on the cheek: but instead of becoming angry at the insult, Eulogius offered him his other cheek, saying: "I pray you, strike me also on this side."

After the execution of St. Eulogius, the Moors endeavored to persuade Leocritia to renounce her faith, but their efforts failing, she was put to death in the same manner as was her friend and teacher, the holy and venerable Eulogius.

"Blessed are they that suffer persecution for justice sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." (Matt 5: 10.)

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## ST. GREGORY THE GREAT.

(March 12.)

"Christian Toleration."

ST. GREGORY, who lived about the middle of the sixth century, was for some time the first magistrate of the city of Rome, but desirous of devoting all his time and talents to the service of God, he resigned his high position, became a monk, founded several convents with his large fortune, and soon became distinguished for his great piety, abstemious manner of living, and wonderful learning. He was, however, permitted to enjoy a contemplative life in the convent but for a short time, as he was sent by Pope Pelagius in the capacity of a Nuncio to the emperor Mauritius, who at that time resided in the city of Constantinople. The discharge of his duties as ambassador kept him for some time in that city, and though life at the imperial court had many distractions and temptations, Gregory lived strictly according to the rigid rule of his convent. While in Constantinople he wrote an excellent treatise on the book of Job. By his efforts and great learning he succeeded in leading back to the true belief the first Bishop of Constantinople, who had embraced heresy; and he was so highly esteemed by the emperor, that he chose him to stand as godfather to his son.

After the death of Pelagius, Gregory was unanimously chosen Pope; but in his humility he preferred to remain a poor monk, and wrote to the emperor, begging him not to confirm his election. Hearing that the governor of Rome had intercepted his letter, and had entreated the emperor not to listen to his refusal, Gregory escaped from the city and concealed himself in the forest, but his place of refuge was discovered, and he was brought back to Rome. He became convinced that it was the will of God that he should take possession of the Papal See, although it grieved him deeply to exchange his quiet monastic life for a position so elevated, and one burdened with so many cares and responsibilities.

The Catholic Church was at that time in a very sad condition. The Longobards, a nation of barbarians, who had made an inroad into Italy and threatened to attack Rome, were partly addicted to idolatry, and partly to the Arian heresy. Quarrels and discords of every kind prevailed among the Bishops in Istria. Through Spain, and in some parts of France, the doctrine of Arius was taught by the Visigoths: England was held by the heathen Anglo-Saxons; in Africa, the Donatists had for three hundred years been undermining the foundations of the Catholic Church; the heresies of Nestorius and Eutyches were widely spread in Asia, and wicked abuses generally prevailed in other parts of the Christian world.

It would certainly have been a great and meritorious work to exterminate a single one of the evils we have enumerated. St. Gregory, however, although

afflicted by many bodily infirmities, succeeded by almost superhuman efforts in removing them all. He led the Longobards back to the true Catholic faith, reconciled the Goths again with the Church, propagated Christianity among the Anglo-Saxons, put an end to the confusion which the Donatists had caused in Africa, and purified the Christian world of many errors and abuses in matters of faith and morals.

Though constantly occupied with the great amount of labor which the discharge of the duties of his high office necessarily imposed upon him, St. Gregory regarded it as his special duty to preach the word of God; and he has left us several works, which are among the most instructive and edifying to be found in the Christian world. He reformed and greatly improved church music, and issued new and judicious regulations for divine service. His wonderful activity for the welfare of the Church was so great and extensive, that the name: "*Gregory the Great*" was given to him, though in his humility he called himself "*Scrvus servorum Dei*," that is, "*Servant of servants of God*." A man who has accomplished so much for religion, so much that is great and enduring, and one whom the Catholic Church venerates, may serve us as the true type of a virtue against which the zealous frequently sin, I mean the virtue of toleration.

There are persons who hate all who are not of the same religious belief as themselves. They imagine this feeling to be zeal for the cause of religion, and forget that LOVE is the real mark of a true Christian. St. Gregory blamed such fanatics, who without clear proof cause other persons to be looked upon as unbelievers, and he protected the persecuted by saying: "If we do not trust those who have made their confession of faith, we must doubt the faith of all Christians. Thus we not only fail to bring back to the flock the stray sheep, but cruelly expose to the attacks of wild beasts those in the flock. We must, therefore, be very careful not to wrong a Catholic by causing him to be suspected of heresy."

He wished those who had fallen into error to be received again into the communion of the Church as soon as they were willing to renounce their heresy. The Bishop of Terracina had shown himself intolerant towards the Jews, and on that occasion St. Gregory said: "Those who do not belong to the Christian religion must be brought to the true faith by kindness, benevolence, exhortations, and admonitions, in order not to frighten back by severity such as desire to join the community of the faithful, drawn thither by the beauty of the Gospel."

The pagans of England, after their conversion, still retained many of their heathenish customs, but instead of being filled with anger, when he heard of it, St. Gregory said: "He who wishes to reach the top of a mountain, can not do it by one jump, but only by ascending gradually."

According to St. Gregory it is, therefore, wrong: 1. To suspect or cause to be suspected, without clear proof, a person of having departed from the truth

of the Catholic faith. It is a great sin to throw suspicion upon the orthodoxy of a priest or writer, and thus render his words or writings sterile. We may apply here the words of St. Augustin : "*In necessariis unitas, in dubiis libertas, in omnibus caritas,*" that is, "*In necessary things, unity; in doubtful things, liberty; and in all things, charity.*"

2. According to St. Gregory it is our duty to show to those who adhere to a false faith, the truth of our own by the love which animates us. By means of charity and kindness we must strive to gain their hearts, and it becomes then much easier to lead them back to the light of faith. And he even says, that we must be just also towards those who do not believe in Christ or even in God.

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## ST. NICEPHORUS.

(March 13.)

"Christian Images."

ST. GREGORY, whose life we read yesterday, was once informed that the Bishop of Marseilles, inspired with a foolish zeal, had banished from his church the statues of the saints, for fear that they might be worshiped. St. Gregory, therefore, wrote to him the following letter: "You should not have destroyed that which was exhibited in the church, not for worship, but merely for the instruction of the ignorant. To worship an image, and to be reminded by an image, representing some remarkable event of sacred history, what to worship, are two very different things."

From the earliest ages it has been a custom of the Catholic Church to have images reminding us of Christ and the Saints; for as religious books serve to remind us of God, holy persons, and matters, so also may this end be attained by means of images. The Christian honors the holy Scriptures, or his prayer-book, because they are the sources from which he imbibes his religious belief; and we also cherish the likenesses of dear and beloved friends. The Catholic Church, therefore, teaches nothing wrong when she asks us to honor the images of Christ or of his friends, the Saints. Nicephorus, whose memory the Church commemorates to-day, was, as it were, a martyr to this venerable custom; for during his life he was obliged to struggle and to suffer for its maintenance. Seven hundred years after Christ, the emperor at Constantinople, without consulting the Bishops, issued a decree, according to which all statues in the churches or in the streets and houses were to be destroyed. They vented their rage not only upon the images, but also upon those who venerated them, and



this destroying of images lasted for over a century. St. Nicephorus was born during this period. His father, Theodore, was the private secretary of the emperor Copronimus, a great iconoclast. Having been informed that Theodore possessed images of the Saviour and of the most blessed Virgin, he questioned him upon the subject; and Theodore frankly acknowledging his veneration for them, the emperor severely punished him, and sent him into exile.

Nicephorus, distinguished for his pious Christian character and great learning, was by a later emperor, who adhered to the true faith, entrusted with the same high office that his father had filled, and like his father he was faithful to the veneration of Christian images.

Some time after, Nicephorus felt a great desire to renounce the world and its turmoils; he, therefore, resigned his high office, and established, with several other persons similarly disposed, a convent, where he occupied himself chiefly with prayer, the study of the sacred writings, and other pious exercises. He advanced in knowledge and in the practice of every Christian virtue, and prepared himself, without knowing it, for the new and highly important career upon which he was about to enter.

The patriarch of Constantinople, who ranked next to the Pope, had died, and Nicephorus, although he remonstrated against it, was unanimously chosen to be his successor. As patriarch he zealously labored to promote by word and example the kingdom of God. While occupied in the duties of his sacred office, the emperor Leo ascended the throne. He was bitterly opposed to the veneration of Christian images, and endeavored at first stealthily, and afterwards by force, to do away with their veneration. Knowing that he could not succeed in his efforts if not aided by the patriarch, he tried to persuade St. Nicephorus that the veneration of images was contrary to the true Christian faith. The Saint having proved to him that the use of images was in keeping with the testimony of the sacred writings, and with the most ancient customs of the Church, the emperor replied: "Did Moses not also teach the word of God? And did Moses not forbid the making of a likeness of a man or of other things?" "The Jews came from Egypt," was the answer of the patriarch, "where the figures of animals and men were worshiped as gods. To prevent the Jews from falling into this idolatry, they were forbidden to make images with the intention of worshiping them, as has been expressly added. But to possess images, if they were not worshiped, was not forbidden to the Jews, for we read that Solomon ordered the making of the images of oxen for the temple, and the figures of lions on his throne; and Moses himself had constructed golden cherubim over the ark of the covenant, and made, by command of God, a brazen serpent, at the time when poisonous serpents spread death in the camp, in order to save all who would look at this brazen serpent. But when the Jews made a golden calf and worshiped it, they committed a great sin, not by making the image, but by worshiping it as God. We Christians, therefore, commit no sin by mak-

ing images of the Martyrs and Saints, for we do not worship them, and do not regard them as gods."

This defense of the true faith did not prevail with the emperor, and as he was unable to refute the arguments of St. Nicephorus, he determined to punish him. On account of his fidelity to the doctrines and customs of the Catholic Church, he was exiled to a distant convent. The emperor placed a man in the patriarchal chair who obeyed him in all things. The priests who would not condemn the veneration of images, were persecuted, imprisoned, abused, and some of them put to death, and the walls of the churches upon which had been represented events of sacred history, or the deeds and sufferings of the martyrs, were washed over with lime and the statues of Saints disfigured in all possible ways.

The punishment of heaven, however, drawn down upon the people by their atrocious wickedness, soon became visible. Earthquakes destroyed whole cities, famine and civil war with its terrible consequences desolated the country, and the emperor Leo was killed by his own soldiers in the temple on Christmas-day.

The emperor Michael, who succeeded Leo, was also an iconoclast, but he offered to St. Nicephorus permission to return upon condition that he would not speak at all concerning the veneration of images. The Saint, however, would not yield, but preferred to remain in exile, where he died in the fourteenth year of his banishment.

There is not a single doctrine in the Catholic Church which is not beneficial to us, if rightly understood, believed in, and faithfully observed. Such a doctrine is also that regarding the images of Saints and sacred events. While St. Nicephorus had to suffer long and much on account of his fidelity to the custom of the Church, we in our days are enabled to possess and venerate such images without being subjected to annoyance or danger. We have, therefore, no excuse for neglecting this beautiful custom. The mind of man in general—and who can deny it?—is too much given up to the things of the world. Scarcely an hour may have elapsed since one has listened to an edifying sermon or was deep in fervent prayer, when in a moment the world with its thousand cares, sorrows, affairs, and distractions fills his whole being. Is it not for his own good then when the crucifix on the road, the picture of a Saint painted upon the wall, or the image of the Holy Virgin on a medal strikes his eye? A single glance at one of these is frequently attended by the same result as would occur from listening to an impressive sermon, and leads back the soul to that which is necessary for its eternal salvation. How many Christians have been comforted in great bodily afflictions, and in the agonies of death, by the sight of a crucifix hanging opposite their bed!

Let us thank God, O Christians, that He offers, through His holy Church, this symbolic means of edifying our souls, and let us thank St. Nicephorus, and

those like him, who by their heroic firmness have preserved for the Church this holy custom of venerating the crucifix, the statues of the Blessed Virgin, and the images of the Saints.

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## ST. MATILDA.

(March 14.)

"Solicitude for the Souls of the Departed."

MATILDA was the wife of Henry I., emperor of Germany, a prince who, about nine hundred years ago, contributed much to the welfare and strength of Germany. She was a real protectress of the poor, a comforter of the afflicted, a ready intercessor for those deprived of their liberty, and a truly pious and obedient daughter of her heavenly Father. The matrimonial life of the imperial pair was a most happy one, for both were animated by the same love to Christ, the same desire to do His holy will, the same love and care for their subjects, and the same eagerness for the accomplishment of good works.

The emperor, assisted by his wife, had just finished the necessary preparations for the establishment of a convent, when he became ill, and felt that death was approaching. After having entrusted Matilda with the most important affairs, he said: "O thou most faithful and beloved wife, I thank God that thou wilt survive me, for no man was ever yet united to a wife more faithful, and to one loving the good of those belonging to them more than thou hast done. I thank thee, thou didst always appease my anger, and assist me with thy wise counsel; thou hast often led me from injustice back to justice, and hast always exhorted me to assist the oppressed. I commend, with my own soul, that is on the point of leaving the body, thee and our sons to Almighty God, and to the intercession of the Saints."

When the emperor had yielded up his spirit, Matilda fell on her knees, and prayed for his soul, after which she inquired if any priest was present who had not yet broken his fast, in order that he might immediately celebrate holy Mass for the repose of the soul of her husband. A priest named Adeldack, offered himself for that purpose, and the empress, much comforted thereby, took two golden bracelets from her arm, and gave them to the priest, saying: "Take them, and celebrate Mass for his departed soul."

After Mass, Matilda returned to the room of the emperor, where she met her sons and the officers of rank belonging to the army. Bathed in tears, she prayed most fervently; and leading her sons before the lifeless body of their father, she exhorted them most impressively always to fear God, and to live



together in peace and unity. During the rest of her life she devoted the anniversary of her husband's death to religious exercises and prayer for the repose of his soul.

St. Matilda was a perfect model of a Christian widow. She lived a most self-denying and retired life, and spent her time in prayer and in doing works of charity. When her own sons, instigated by wicked persons, persecuted her, under the pretext that she squandered all her property on the poor, and when they deprived her also of her annuities, even this, the most cruel grief that can befall the heart of a mother, was not able to call forth in her a feeling of bitterness, and she looked upon the iniquities and hard-heartedness of her children as a punishment deserved on account of her own sinfulness. Her unfeeling and disobedient sons did not, however, escape punishment. Otto experienced continual misfortunes in war, and Henry fell dangerously ill. These visitations, the exhortations of true friends, and the fervent prayers of St. Matilda, had at last such an effect upon the sons, that they repented of what they had done, and begging the pardon of their afflicted mother, were fully reconciled with her.

The following occurrence may serve as a proof how the Christian spirit which animated St. Matilda, prevented the least rancorous feeling from dwelling in the heart of the mother who had been so cruelly wronged.

Her eldest son, the emperor Otto, paid his mother a visit in Nordhausen, and remained there for eight days. Before his departure the mother and son heard Mass, after the celebration of which they gave each other the parting kiss before the entrance of the church, so that all who witnessed this touching scene could not restrain their tears. The emperor mounted his horse, and Matilda, re-entering the church, went to the place where her son had stood during the divine service, and weeping knelt down, and kissed his footsteps. Count Witigo, who had followed the empress, communicated to the emperor what he had seen, and Otto immediately dismounted, hastened back to the church, where he found his mother still in the same place in prayer and tears. Most deeply touched by the manifestation of such great love, he fell on his knees before her, saying: "O most venerable lady, with what service can I repay these tears?"

St. Matilda had just returned to the convent at Quedlinburgh, when she received news of the death of Henry, her second son. Her grief was so intense that she refused for a whole day to take any nourishment. At her bidding the nuns were immediately assembled in the chapel of the convent, and requested by her to implore the mercy of God for the soul of the deceased. She herself knelt down and prayed thus: "O Almighty God, show mercy to the soul of Thy servant, whom Thou hast called from this world, and remember, I beseech Thee, his many sufferings during life."

Soon after she became ill, and predicted the day of her death. Among the many distinguished persons who came to see the dying princess was the Arch-

bishop William of Mayence. His visit gave much joy to the empress, and she begged him to hear her confession, to say Mass for her deceased husband and for herself, and to administer to her the last Sacraments. When he left her, he desired to leave a priest with her, in order that he might be summoned by him as soon as the empress had died; but she told him prophetically not to travel without a priest, as he would be very much in need of one himself. The Archbishop died very suddenly while on his journey. The empress knew of his death before she was informed of it, and ordered the bells to be rung, and alms given to the poor, that they might pray for the soul of the deceased Archbishop.

Twelve days later she sent for her grand-daughter, the Abbess of the convent, and exhorted her once more to lead always a retired life, and to guide those under her care to virtue and godliness; she recommended to her also the soul of the deceased emperor, her own, and the souls of those whom she was in the habit of praying for; and having once more received the holy Sacrament, and listened to the reading of the Gospel, she died peaceably, at nine o'clock in the morning, the hour at which she was accustomed to feed the poor.

Humility and great love for God and man, virtues by which all Saints are distinguished, were also prominent in the character of St. Matilda; but the point upon which we intend especially to dwell, was her great care for the souls of her relatives and acquaintances who had departed from this world.

As our love does not cease with the death of those who were dear to us in life, so also the desire continues to benefit them even beyond the grave. A loving wife, who, when they were alive, loved and cared for her husband, her children, benefactors, and friends, will not merely lament and weep when death deprives her of them, but her love and care will follow them, and she will strive to labor for their welfare in the next world. What the human heart and the very nature of love demands, is also in harmony with reason and the Catholic faith. We know, for the Lord has said it, that nothing impure can enter heaven, and that every debt must be paid; and we know also, that with but few exceptions even the best are not free from sin; but if such can not immediately enter the abode of bliss, our merciful Father will certainly not condemn them for ever to the punishment of hell. There must be, therefore, a middle place after death, in which sins can be atoned for, and faults pardoned—and this is Purgatory, or the place of purification. As certainly, therefore, as the intercession of the Saints in heaven is heard in our behalf, although we are yet on earth, just as certainly may our prayers, in which we implore the mercy of God for our suffering friends in Purgatory, cause a shortening and mitigation of their punishment; and the Catholic Church has, therefore, ordered in the Masses said for departed souls, a passage to be read from the second book of the Machabees, 12 : 43-46 : “In those days, the most valiant man Judas, making a gathering, sent twelve thousand drachms of silver to Jerusalem for sacri-

fice to be offered for the sins of the dead, thinking well and religiously concerning the resurrection (for if he had not hoped that they that were slain should rise again, it would have seemed superfluous and vain to pray for the dead;) and because he considered that they who had fallen asleep with godliness, had great grace laid up for them. It is, therefore, a holy and wholesome thought to pray for the dead, that they may be loosed from sins."

We see, then, that even in the Old Testament days sacrifices and prayers were always offered up for the souls of deceased persons. Show, therefore, your faith and love as a member of the Catholic Church by interesting yourself in the welfare of the departed, especially of your deceased relations and friends. The Catholic Church teaches us that this may be done by means of prayer, alms-giving, and by the offering up of the divine sacrifice of the Mass.

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## ST. ZACHARY.

(March 15.)

"Peacemakers."

THE most fitting inscription upon the tomb-stone of this Saint would have been: "Blessed are the peace-makers, for they shall be called the children of God." (Matt. 5 : 9.)

Zachary was seated in the Pontifical chair seven hundred and forty years after Christ. Luitbrand, king of the Longobards, had at that time taken possession of a part of Italy, especially of four cities belonging to the dominion of the Pope, and made many of the inhabitants prisoners. It was in the power of the Pope to call the king of the Franks to his assistance, but Zachary preferred to settle his affairs in a peaceable manner, and he betook himself for that purpose to the camp of Luitbrand. The latter received him with great reverence, and Zachary spoke with such evangelic simplicity and convincing clearness, that the heart of the warrior was touched, and he consented to evacuate all the cities he had unjustly occupied, and presented the Pope with all his captives, that is, gave them their freedom without ransom. On the return of the Pope to Rome the inhabitants, carrying olive-branches, went to meet him, and accompanied him to his palace with loud rejoicings and blessings. Zachary ordered a solemn procession for the purpose of offering thanks to God, that he had been successful in his effort for peace.

After the death of the emperor Leo in Constantinople, Luitbrand intended to conquer the province and city of Ravenna, belonging to the Greek empire. The governor of Ravenna was powerless against such an enemy, and the king



of the Longobards having already taken possession of several of the cities of that province, the priests and magistrates of Ravenna begged the Pope to intercede for them. Zachary immediately sent two men of high rank to Luitbrand provided with rich presents, in order to dissuade him from his unjust purpose; but Luitbrand haughtily replied: "Shall I always be deprived of the fortunes of war and of victory by a priest, by a feeble old man?" The mission of the papal delegates to the angry king utterly failed, and Ravenna was threatened with a destructive siege.

The Pope, however, was not discouraged, and resolved to call himself on Luitbrand to beg him to desist from his intentions in regard to Ravenna. On the eve of the festival of St. Peter he arrived at Pavia, where Luitbrand then resided. He celebrated High Mass in the church dedicated to this Apostle, in order to implore the blessing of heaven upon his undertaking; and on the following day, in his interview with the king, he depicted to him in glowing words the injustice of the war he had begun, the great sufferings it caused the people, the horrible crimes so frequently committed in time of war by unruly soldiers, the innocent blood that was shed, and the great responsibility upon him who had commenced such a war. He entreated the king to give peace to the country, and Luitbrand, unable to resist the touching and convincing eloquence of the Pope, concluded terms of peace with the governor of Ravenna.

Several years later Rachis, the successor of Luitbrand, again commenced hostilities, and even threatened the city of Rome with his army. In their dejection and consternation the inhabitants looked upon St. Zachary as their only hope. He first endeavored to appease the king's anger by sending him many rich presents, and then, accompanied by a few priests, went to the camp of Rachis, and remonstrated so successfully with him, that Rachis abandoned the expedition he had entered upon, and voluntarily evacuated the cities and castles he had conquered.

It is undoubtedly a greater and more praiseworthy work to avert the calamities of war and to make peace, than to win battles and destroy the welfare of nations. Let us imitate St. Zachary by living in peace with all men, by striving to make peace, where discord has arisen, and by preventing quarrels.

Sycophants, instigators of quarrels, and persons who rejoice in causing enmity between man and man are true sons and daughters of Satan. Resolve, therefore, dear reader, to become a child of the peace-loving Saviour; strive to reconcile enemies, prevent discord between friends, and make peace whenever it is in your power; for by doing so, you enrich yourself with merit in the eyes of the Lord. If your efforts fail, then implore God from the depth of your heart to reconcile those who live in enmity with one another.

We will conclude by quoting what the historian says of the character of Pope Zachary:

"Zachary, by birth a Greek, occupied the chair of St. Peter for ten years,

six months, and fourteen days. He was a man of exceedingly mild and gentle manners, and full of charity and benevolence towards the clergy and the Roman people,—slow to anger and always ready to forgive, never returning evil for evil, never revenging himself, but always charitable and compassionate. He loved his clergy and people like a father, cared for them like a good shepherd, and protected them to the utmost of his power. Therefore, all whom God had entrusted to him lived during his life-time in peace and happiness.”

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### ST. MARY, THE PENITENT.

(March 16.)

“Watchfulness.”

IN the writings of St. Ephrem, one of the Fathers of the Church, who lived three hundred years after Christ, we find recorded the life of St. Abraham, who was a friend of St. Ephrem, and an exceedingly pious man. After giving a full description of the godly life led by the hermit Abraham, he continues thus: “Abraham had a brother, who, when he died, left a daughter, seven years of age. The child was brought by her relatives to her uncle, who received her kindly, and appropriated to her use the front part of his hermitage, while he occupied the back part. A small window connected both cells, and instructed by her uncle in the holy Scripture, she grew up in virtue and purity. Like a beautiful and innocent lamb, like a spotless dove, she thus lived for twenty years with her uncle, whose greatest joy was to witness her pure and holy life, her ready obedience, her gentleness, and her great love for God.

“Satan, that prince of cunning, seeing the virgin only occupied with heaven and advancing daily in perfection, determined to effect her ruin, and thereby cause grief and sorrow to St. Abraham. There lived in the neighborhood a so-called monk, who under the pretext of seeking the edifying conversation of St. Abraham, frequently visited the hermitage. He had once seen the pious maiden through the window of Abraham’s cell, and from that moment laid for her all possible snares, until he finally succeeded in leading her from the path of virtue. But as the eyes of our first parents were opened after they had tasted the forbidden fruit, so also was the unhappy maiden full of terror and despair after she had committed sin; and unspeakably wretched in her heart she exclaimed: ‘O what is life now to me? It is lost, and with it the fruit of virtue and purity, the gain of all my tears. For what purpose shall I live longer? Woe is me, what have I done! What cloud covered my understanding, that I could so deeply offend God! Where shall I hide my shame? Whither

shall I escape? Of what use was the warning of my godly uncle, of what use the admonition of his friend Ephrem, telling me: "Be watchful and preserve your soul spotless for the immortal bridegroom, for the bridegroom is holy and jealous!" I dare no longer look up to heaven, for I am dead to God and man. It is better that I should go where no one knows me, for I am in the jaws of hell, and without the hope of salvation.' She accordingly fled to a city and supported herself by living a sinful life in a tavern."

St. Mary enjoyed all the advantages that can lead one to virtue and perfection; from her early youth she was separated from the world and its wicked pleasures. The Christian example of her pious uncle was day and night before her eyes, and for years did she exercise rigid self-denial and great abstinence. And yet from the height of Christian perfection she fell into the abyss of mortal sin. The cause was *want of watchfulness*, she felt no fear for her innocence, and neither dreaded nor avoided danger.

And, now, dear reader, who is in greater danger of falling a victim to corruption, he who for years has led a pious and Christian life, or he who has perhaps never earnestly thought of virtue? Be therefore watchful; your daily prayer should be: "Lead us not into temptation;" do not lead yourself into danger and temptation! Beware of ball-rooms, beware of frivolous and thoughtless companions, beware of all that can tempt and lead you to offend God.

St. Ephrem continues thus:

"Two years after she had left the peaceful hermitage, it was revealed to St. Abraham where his niece could be found, and the manner of life she led. He disguised himself as a soldier and rode to the place of her retreat. Here he found her in the service of Satan, and unspeakable grief took possession of his heart, but by a high degree of self-command he suppressed his agony, and taking Mary into a room alone, he uncovered his head, and bursting into tears, exclaimed: 'Mary, my child, do you not know me? Have you forgotten Abraham your father, with whom you lived? Why did you leave me and cause me such intolerable anguish.' Mary was speechless in her consternation, and unable to look in his face. Fear and shame overwhelmed her. Seeing this, St. Abraham continued: 'Why do you not speak to me, my daughter? Has not tenderness and pity for you brought me here? I take your sin upon me, my child. I will defend you before God at the last judgment. I will atone for your sin:' and he comforted her until midnight. At last, encouraged by the goodness of her uncle, Mary dared to answer, and said: 'Shame makes it almost impossible for me to look into your face, my uncle. Can I ever again utter with my lips the pure and holy name of my Saviour, stained as I am with every species of sin?' St. Abraham replied: 'I take your sin upon me, my child; God will call me to account for it; only come with me to your former home. My daughter, I pray you have pity on my old age, have pity on my gray hairs, and follow me!' Yes, I will obey you,' said Mary, 'and God will



accept my repentance. On my knees I thank you, my saintly uncle, and kiss your holy footsteps, that you have shown such tenderness towards me by coming here to deliver me from the snares of Satan.'

"At the break of day they left the abode of sin, and like a shepherd who takes on his shoulders the sheep that had been lost and found again, to carry it back to his flock, so did St. Abraham with a joyful heart, lead the horse on which Mary was seated back to his hermitage. Here she spent her days in humility and tears, in watching and fasting, in fervent prayer and in the exercise of penance. Her conversion was complete, and her soul was thoroughly purified and regenerated. With indefatigable perseverance she implored God to make known to her if her repentance was agreeable to Him, and God in His infinite mercy endowed her with the gift of healing the afflicted, manifesting thereby the pleasure with which he had accepted her repentance.

"St. Abraham enjoyed for ten years the pleasure of seeing his niece restored to God, and Mary lived five years after her uncle's death, growing daily in the fear and grace of the Lord. The countenance of the holy penitent, in the moment, when she yielded up her spirit, beamed with heavenly beauty, called forth by the glorious presence of the angels: and we praised God, who in His infinite mercy blesses all who hope in Him with the completion of celestial joy in Jesus Christ, our Lord."

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## ST. PATRICK:

(March 17.)

"Gratitude."

THERE is no Catholic country, since the reformation, that has suffered more from religious persecution than Ireland. Scotland and Sweden submitted to acts of violence on the part of their rulers, who forced them to apostatize from the holy Catholic Church; but Ireland, with its seven millions of inhabitants, remained faithful, although on that account temporal misery and distress has been her portion even up to the present day. The Catholic religion has been deeply rooted in the hearts of the Irish people, and it is, therefore, worth while to learn something of the gardener who broke the uncultivated soil of paganism in that country, and planted there so successfully the seed of Christianity,—to become acquainted with the Saint whose blessed memory we commemorate to-day,—St. Patrick. We know not with certainty whether he was born in Scotland or France, but we know that in his sixteenth year he was kidnapped by a wandering gang of robbers, and taken as a slave to Ireland. His occupation

now was that of a shepherd; and being obliged to expose himself to snow and rain on the mountains and in the woods, he suffered greatly from hunger and cold. But in his low condition and great misery God blessed him with the greatest gift that can be given to man. St. Patrick became conscious of his sinfulness, and turned his heart to God. He co-operated with the grace he received by being constantly engaged in prayer, meditation, and penance, and from that moment faith, fear, and love of God took possession of his heart.

Six years after he had been taken captive, God revealed to him that he should return home, and that the ship which was to carry him thither was already waiting for him. Although he was quite distant from the sea-coast, and not at all acquainted with the roads, he left at once, and found the ship just upon the eve of sailing; but God moved the heathen sailors to take St. Patrick as a passenger, although he was without the means of paying his passage. After three days they landed, but the country was so uncultivated that they wandered about for a long time without finding any food. St. Patrick had frequently spoken of the power of God to the heathen crew, and they asked him now why he did not implore his God in this their time of need. He replied: "If you will pray with me to the God of the Christians, we shall certainly be assisted." They did so, and the same day they met a herd of swine, that served as food for them until they came to a more civilized part of the country.

St. Patrick at last reached the home of his parents; but here also he had much to suffer. He himself speaks of twelve perils in his life, from which God saved him. During his sojourn at home, St. Patrick saw in a vision a messenger from Ireland who brought to him many letters, on one of which was written: "The call of the Irish." He had just commenced to read the letter, when he heard a voice from the Irish coast, calling: "O come, come, and live among us!" St. Patrick was so deeply impressed with what he had seen, that he regarded it as a revelation that he had been destined for the conversion of Ireland.

After having prepared himself for the priesthood, and received ordination, his relatives and friends, and even his own confessor, used every effort in their power to divert him from his purpose; but although greatly attached to his family, friends, and country, St. Patrick overcame all obstacles, and remained faithful to the destiny to which God had called him. He was then consecrated Bishop, and thenceforth determined to devote all his spiritual and physical strength to the service of God; he resolved to carry His name to a nation of heathens, to undergo every hardship for the accomplishment of his purpose, and to accept fortune and misfortune with the same submission to the will of God. Full of his high resolve, he left his family and native country, and set out for Ireland.

When landing on the coast of Ireland, St. Patrick and his companions were taken for pirates, and the magistrate of that part of the country marched against him with armed men; but when he saw the venerable appearance of the stranger, and heard him speak, he invited him to his house, and soon after he with his whole family joined the community of Christians. Without fearing the dangers to which he was continually exposed, St. Patrick traveled over the whole country, even to the remotest and most uninhabitable parts, and by the sound of a cattle-drum would assemble the people, that he might proclaim to them the Gospel of Jesus Christ. His sermons and fearlessness were crowned with great success, and many people, princes, and nobles, were baptized by him. Once, while he rested near a spring, and sang with his companions a sacred song, two princesses came for the purpose of bathing. Astonished to find men in white garments, holding books in their hands, they asked if they belonged to the earth, or if they had descended from heaven. St. Patrick spoke to them of God, and the maidens asked him where God dwelt—on the mountains, in the valleys, in the sea, or in the river? St. Patrick instructed them in the fundamental principles of Christianity, which the two sisters accepted so readily, and with such believing hearts, that he baptized them on the spot, and from thenceforth they devoted themselves to the service of God.

Many of those converted by St. Patrick wished to present him with a part of their temporal goods; but avoiding the least appearance of selfishness, and desirous not to have his holy office slandered by the heathens, he refused to accept even the smallest gift from the many thousands whom he baptized.

In his zeal for the propagation of Christianity, St. Patrick had also to endure many grievous persecutions. Korotic, who at that time ruled over a part of Ireland, made a predatory excursion on Easter Sunday and fell suddenly upon the place where St. Patrick had just been baptizing. He put to death many of the newly-baptized, and took many prisoners, whom he sold as slaves to the heathens. As Korotic pretended to be a Christian, St. Patrick wrote a letter to him in which he begged him to set free the Christians whom he had sold into captivity; but Korotic having answered his appeal with sneers and scoffings, St. Patrick was obliged to issue against him a pastoral letter. In this letter he humbly calls himself a poor and ignorant sinner, but declares that in spite of his unworthiness he had been appointed by the will of God Bishop of Ireland, and that, therefore he was not permitted to pass over in silence the crime of Korotic, that of selling Christians as slaves to heathens. He solemnly excommunicated Korotic and all who had been concerned with him in his crime from the Christian community, and commanded, by virtue of his authority as Bishop, no Christian to eat with them, to accept alms of them, or to have any intercourse with them, until they had appeased the anger of God by sincere penance, and by returning the Christian captives. He commanded all into whose hands his mandate should fall, to make known its contents to others, and



that it should be read before the people, and especially before Korotic and his adherents.

Although St. Patrick wished to revisit his native country, and to see once more his relatives and friends, he withstood the burning desire of his heart, because he feared that by leaving Ireland he might injure the cause of God. He remained therefore, and devoted all his energies and his life to the propagation of Christianity in that country, and God blessed the labor of his faithful servant so miraculously, that almost all that portion of Ireland which on the arrival of St. Patrick had been shrouded in the gloomy darkness of paganism, was at the time of his death illuminated by the light of faith; so that from the rapid and fruitful growth of Christianity in the well-prepared ground of Ireland, it was called the "*Island of Saints and of Knowledge.*"

Although fourteen hundred years have passed away since he labored on earth, there is no Saint, with the exception of the Blessed Virgin Mary, whose memory is more honored throughout a whole nation than is that of St. Patrick. He is revered and loved by the whole Irish people, even until the present day. Other Saints have accomplished as wonderful things, and many have undergone greater sufferings for the sake of Christ, and have even died martyrs; but none have been more venerated than has been St. Patrick. This great love of the Irish for St. Patrick is founded in the *gratitude* which they feel for the gift of faith.

The priceless treasure of faith, like all other blessings, comes from God; and to Him, above all, do we owe gratitude. But it is most pleasing to God, and it is His will, that we should be grateful to those who have been and are the instruments of His blessings. The Irish, in their gratitude to St. Patrick, who brought the Gospel of Christ to their native country, can serve, therefore, as a model to all faithful Christians.

Perhaps, dear reader, you have never asked; and are even ignorant of the name of him who was the Apostle of Christianity in your native country. If so, be at least grateful to the benefactors whom you know; be grateful to your parents, through whom God has daily shown to you, and perhaps still shows, so much kindness; be grateful to your pastors and teachers, especially to those who have instructed, and still instruct you in the religion of Christ; be grateful to every one who by the providence of God exercises a salutary influence over your physical and spiritual welfare. It is true that the Irish, who show so much honor and gratitude to their spiritual father, are not, in a worldly sense, greatly favored as a nation; but God has recompensed their fidelity even in this life by preserving to them the light and comfort of the Catholic faith, as He has done with the greater part of Great Britain. It is in truth the most beautiful reward that God could give to the people of Ireland for the faithful gratitude wherewith they honor their Apostle, that in spite of cruel persecution and strong opposition, they remain firm in their holy faith even until the present

day; and by the blessing of God, and the intercession of glorious St. Patrick, will remain so until time is merged into eternity.

## ST. CYRILL.

(March 18.)

"Durability of the words of Christ."

THERE never was a mortal man so meek as was the Saviour; he would not even appear to be better than the poorest and the most despised of mankind. And this infinitely meek man once spoke the remarkable words: "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away." What seems to be more feeble than a word? it is a breath, a sound, which is heard for a moment and then dies away in the air; but what seems to be more durable than strong, solid walls, and an empire such as was possessed by the Roman emperors? And yet the word of Christ has remained, while monuments and walls and palaces of stone, and even the most powerful empires have decayed, fallen into ruins, not a trace even remaining of them.

During the life-time of St. Cyrill this truth was proved in a manner that astonished even the gentiles and Jews, who trembled thereat. St. Cyrill was Bishop of Jerusalem in the year three hundred and fifty after Christ, and was one of the most highly esteemed Fathers of the Church; he was blameless in his life before God, and a laborer and sufferer for the true faith; on account of his adherence to which he was twice sent into exile. We still possess the writings of St. Cyrill, which are of great value to us, because the Catholic doctrine of the Holy Sacraments is there treated in a clear and vigorous manner.

While Cyrill was Bishop of Jerusalem, Julian ascended the throne of the Roman empire. He was a great enemy of the Christians, but they were already too numerous to suppress by means of force. He endeavored, therefore, to destroy Christianity by other means. The Christian schools were closed, in order to oblige the Christian youth to receive instruction in the schools of the gentiles, and all kinds of heresies were encouraged. He favored especially the Jews, who were the sworn enemies of the Christians, and it was his design to prove false the prophecy of Christ, in which he foretold that the temple of Jerusalem would remain in ruins.

He, therefore, assembled the leaders of the Jews and declared to them that they should return to their native country, rebuild the temple, and live according to their law. He contributed large sums from his treasury and did all in his power to promote his purpose.

The Jews manifested the greatest zeal, and came from all parts of the world to assist in the rebuilding of the temple, and to bring their contributions.

Women of high rank joyfully contributed their jewels and golden ornaments, and labored like common workmen ; but St. Cyrill, firmly confiding in the words of the Lord, asserted that in spite of all their grand preparations the Jews would never be able to reconstruct their temple.

The work was commenced on the same spot where the temple formerly stood. They removed what was still standing of the old walls, in order to raise an entirely new structure, and thus unconsciously fulfilled the prediction of the Lord : "There shall not be left a stone upon a stone," (Mark 13 : 2.) The ground was prepared in order to lay a new foundation ; but what the hands of so many people erected during the day, fell again into ruins during the night. The Jews were not discouraged, and commenced anew ; but when they had so far succeeded that the foundation stone was ready to be laid, a terrible earthquake took place in the night, by which the whole work and almost all the buildings in the neighborhood of the temple were destroyed, and many Jews were killed. Nevertheless, as soon as the earthquake was over, they commenced the work again, and what then happened is corroborated by many old writers, some of whom lived at that time. While they were removing the rubbish, fire burst forth from the earth, in the flames of which many of the laborers perished. Those who escaped fled into a neighboring church to protect themselves from the general conflagration ; but here also did the earth send forth flames, so that many were killed and many more injured. Struck with terror, even the Jews were forced to acknowledge the Divinity of Jesus. Thus the great zeal of the Jews and all the efforts and plans of the emperor were frustrated, and the temple lies in ruins up to the present day. We possess also the testimony of Ammianus Marcellinus, a heathen historian of that time, who in speaking of this remarkable occurrence uses the following language : "With-in the foundation a terrible fire burst forth, the laborers were burned to death and the place rendered inaccessible ; thus, since the very elements have conspired against the undertaking, the work has been abandoned."

On the same spot where Jesus predicted the destruction of Jerusalem, the dispersion of the Jews, and the downfall of the temple, he predicted also the Last Judgment. As certainly therefore, as the one was fulfilled, so sure is it that the latter will be, and then will be judged, as the Lord has predicted, the merciless, the hypocrite, the idle servant, the faithless Christian, all of whom will be rejected ; and the charitable, the meek, the pure in heart, and all those who have suffered for the sake of righteousness will be received into the kingdom of heaven. There is, therefore, nothing more reasonable and beneficial than to trust firmly in the words of the Lord and to manifest this faith in all our actions.

At the same time and place where the Lord in so terrible a manner destroyed by an earthquake and by fire what the pride of man intended to build up against His will, He by another beautiful occurrence showed also the power and eternity of His word. An old writer, Philoſorgus, relates, that while removing the



rubbish, a cavern was discovered in the rock, into which a laborer was let down to see what it contained. He found the cavern partly filled with water, and in the middle of it stood a stone pillar, on the top of which lay something wrapped in fine cloth. He brought it up, and it was found to be a roll of parchment. The Jews and gentiles unrolled it, and read the first words, written in great characters: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." The roll of parchment contained the Gospel of St. John.

## ST. JOSEPH.

(March 19.)

"To be just in the sight of God."

It is certainly the greatest praise for a man, when it is said of him that he is just even in the sight of God. The holy Scriptures, in speaking of St. Joseph, say that he was a just man. Some persons imagine themselves to be just and honest, if they do not commit a crime punishable by the civil law; but let us learn from the life of St. Joseph what a difference there is between being just before God, and being just before the world.

Mary was legitimately betrothed to Joseph at the time when she had conceived, by the Holy Ghost, the Son of God; but neither God nor Mary had told Joseph of it, who, when he discovered her condition, imagined that she had been unfaithful to him. The Jewish law condemned to death all who were found guilty of marital infidelity. Notwithstanding his suspicions, Joseph determined to take no revenge upon her; he brought no charge against her—he had not even spoken to others of the sin which, according to his opinion, Mary had committed, but he resolved to leave her secretly. His heart was already full of Christian charity, even before Christ had appeared and announced the doctrine: "Love your enemies."

In such a manner does the man act who is just in the sight of God; but those who summon their neighbors before court as soon as they suspect themselves to have been wronged by them, who expose the faults of their friends, and speak of them to others, who, in order to defend their own honor, as they think, unsparingly attack the honor of others—all these imagine themselves to be honest persons. They may be just before the world, but before God they are the contrary.

While Joseph thought upon these things, an angel instructed him, in his sleep, that Mary, as a Virgin, would bring forth the Son of God, and that he should not be afraid to take her as his wife. Joseph then did not act according

to his former determination, but did what God commanded him to do through the angel. You should do the same. Do you wish to be just in the sight of God! Give up your own opinion and intention as often as God desires you to do his will; He often speaks to you in your sleep as if by an angel, that is through your conscience; for your conscience is the ear through which the soul listens to the will and commands of God. You must be ready to hear, that is, you must earnestly consider what it is that God demands of you, and you will often hear a distinct answer, that is, you will soon know what is best for you to do.

If a father of a family provides for his wife and children, he only does his duty; natural love tells him to do so, even if he have little or no religion; but this natural love could not be a motive for Joseph to take care of Mary and the child; for Jesus was not his son, and Mary was a virgin; notwithstanding we see, that he did for Mary and the divine Child what he could. He not only traveled with them to Jerusalem, in obedience to the Mosaic law, but when Herod attempted the life of the infant, he gave up his home and means, and fled with Mary and the child to Egypt. It was indeed something for a poor carpenter to leave his home and profession, to go on a troublesome and dangerous journey, to settle in a strange country, where paganism prevailed, and there not only to care for himself, but also for his wife and the child.

To be just before God, is to make sacrifices, and to expose yourself to hardships and even dangers, if the welfare of others, especially of those who belong to you, demand it. It is a grievous sin for the father of a family not to provide for those whom God has given him, and to live well himself, while he neglects the comfort of his wife and children. The Apostle says: "If any man have not care of his own, and especially of those of his house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel." (1 Tim. 5 : 8.) If you take care of your family, because you have a natural love for them, it is only right; but you are not on that account just before God, and even if you should do more, if you take upon yourself the care of your relatives whom you love, you will not even then belong to the just, as did St. Joseph. In order to become truly just, you must show charity towards those who are not bound to you by the ties of flesh and blood, but by those of the spirit, by cultivating a pure love for God and his image—man.

After Herod's death, Joseph was again instructed, in sleep, to return to the land of Israel; but when Joseph heard that the son of Herod reigned in Judea, he did not go thither, fearing that the son of Herod would also attempt the life of the divine Child. He retired, therefore, to another quarter of Israel, to Galilee, where the power of Archelaus could not reach them.

In his belief that Christ was the Son of God, and in his experience that even angels were sent from God, that the life of the Child might be preserved, Joseph must have felt certain that no man could take the life of the Child. Notwithstanding all this, Joseph, inasmuch as he had not received any

divine revelation regarding a resting place in Judea, used all prudence and care in selecting a spot where he could live in safety.

We know very little concerning St. Joseph, for, as becomes a mechanic, he lived a quiet and retired life; but in the little we know of him is shown his perfect justice before God. Consider then what we have found worthy of imitation in the life of St. Joseph. If you wish to be just in the sight of God, take no revenge for any injury done to you by others, whether real or imaginary, but remain quiet if you think that your neighbor has done wrong; listen faithfully to whatever God speaks to you through your conscience; remain pure in body and soul, let your motives be disinterested, and be willing to make some sacrifices for your fellow-creatures.

The holy Scriptures say, that "the just shall inherit the land, and dwell therein for evermore. The mouth of the just shall meditate wisdom, and his tongue shall speak judgment. The law of his God is in his heart, and his steps shall not be supplanted. The wicked watcheth the just man, and seeketh to put him to death, but the Lord will not leave him in his hands, nor condemn him when he shall be judged." (Ps. 36 : 29-33.)

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## ST. CUTHBERT.

(March 20,)

"Nature and Grace."

IN looking at the world and man we observe a continual strife between them. Only by hard labor can man force the earth to yield food; if the soil remains unplowed, weeds grow up instead of wheat; the tree must be pruned and the grape-vine trimmed, if they are expected to bring forth fruit. Nature continually visits man with extremes of heat and cold, with storms and hail, with manifold diseases, with poisonous insects and wild beasts, and in order to protect himself against all these dangers, he is obliged to build for himself a dwelling, to make for himself clothes, to prepare for his use instruments and arms, and to be careful in all things, and to labor incessantly for the preservation of his life.

Originally it was not so; for God in the beginning made man the Lord of the earth, that is, the earth was so constituted that it gave to man all he desired, and the very beasts were submissive to him; but when man became disobedient to God, by committing sin, the whole earth and nature refused to obey him. When however individual persons have attained a high degree of sanctity, and when they are guiltless of sin, the original dominion of man over nature is sometimes restored.



In regard to this fact we read of many wonderful events in the lives of the Saints, which appear to us almost incredible, because we are accustomed to see nature triumphant over man. Many things are related to us of St. Cuthbert, that show how nature can become subservient to man.

More than a thousand years ago he was Superior of a convent in England, and not only served God in his convent, but also traveled about to convert others to the true faith. The country people desired so much to hear the word of God, that they ran after Cuthbert, wherever he was. He visited the distant mountain-villages, where the people, from want of instruction, had remained sunk in ignorance and darkness, and brought them back to God by the clearness, power, and fervor of his sermons. He afterwards retired to a small island, there to live alone with God, but was soon after elected Bishop of Lindisfarn, which office he only accepted at the express command of the king and of the Bishops. When Bishop he still led an austere life. He was very kind to the poor, and interested himself in their temporal as well as in their spiritual welfare; but his greatest solicitude was to preserve and lead to God the flock confided to him. Two years after his elevation to the episcopacy he felt his end approaching, he therefore resigned his office, in order to prepare himself for death.

Among the many miracles related of him, we select the following :

He once went on a mission, accompanied by a boy, but before reaching the place of their destination, they both became hungry and tired. The boy lamented that they had taken no food with them, and that nothing could be had where they were. St. Cuthbert said: "My child, you must always have faith and hope in God; for no one will starve who faithfully serves Him;" and looking towards heaven, he said: "Do you see that eagle? Even through him God can send us food." While conversing with each other, the path led them along the bank of a river, from whence they saw the eagle sitting on a rock. St. Cuthbert said to the boy: "Run and see what God has sent to us by this messenger, and bring it here." The boy brought back a large fish, which the eagle had caught in the river. The Saint then said: "But, my son, why did you not give the messenger his portion also? Be quick and divide the fish in half, and carry one half to the eagle as a reward for his services." The boy did so; the other portion they prepared in the next house they reached, and with it satisfied not only their own hunger, but gave plentifully of it to all the inmates of the house.

When St. Cuthbert lived in seclusion, he sowed some land with wheat, in order to derive therefrom his necessary sustenance; but the birds came and picked out the newly-planted seed. The Saint said to them: "Why do you take what you have not sowed? Are you in want of it more than I? If you got permission from God to do so, then do what He has permitted; but if not, fly away and do not injure the property of others." He had hardly finished

these words, when the birds flew away, and from that time never again injured his crop.

The place in which he lived was full of rocks, and no water could be found there; but confiding in the omnipotence of Him who made water come out of a rock in the desert, he made a hole in one of the rocks, and behold, it was filled the next day with water.

St. Cuthbert wished to build an addition to his hermitage, and for that reason wanted a piece of timber, twelve feet long. He asked some of the brothers, who came to see him, to furnish him with it. They promised to do so, but forgot all about it, and when they shortly afterwards again visited the Saint, he said to them: "God will not forget me, wait only until to-morrow." During the night the sea washed ashore a piece of timber of the very dimensions the Saint wished for, and on the spot where the addition was to be made.

Many other miracles are related of St. Cuthbert, especially the wonderful cures of persons afflicted with various diseases. In his last sickness he wished to be served by a faithful brother, named Pallistodus, who was himself ill; notwithstanding which he went alone to the Saint, and became perfectly well as soon as he had touched St. Cuthbert.

God has shown us, in the life of this Saint, how it would have been with man had he avoided sin; for he would then have been truly the master of all things on earth; but He has also shown to us, by these miracles, how it will be when the kingdom of God is established everywhere, when sin has been destroyed, and when all things have been made anew. It is for this reason that we pray: "Thy kingdom come."

## BLESSED NICHOLAS VON DER FLUE.

(March 21.)

"Piety."

WE have selected from the oldest biography written of this wonderful man the principal facts of his life.

Nicholas was a farmer, and lived in Switzerland. He was the father of ten children, and was one of the officers of the grand council; but it was the desire of his heart to retire from the world, and to serve God alone. He, therefore, one day left his wife, children, and his native country, in order to live in solitude. He settled in Reust, and built for himself a small frame house, assisted by his neighbors. The labor, the watching, and praying day and night, with which he chastised and mortified his body during his whole life-time, is almost

incredible. The cell in which he lived was only nine feet long, and four feet wide, and so low that his head touched the ceiling. Two openings, which could be covered with his hands, were the windows. His furniture consisted of a stool, a block of wood, which served as his pillow, and a coverlid made of gray cloth. His dress consisted of a long coat, reaching down to his ancles. He never wore shoes, always had his head uncovered, and was never seen unless saying the beads. While in Reust he sent secretly for a priest, whom he had previously known, named Oswald Isner, who was the pastor of Kevus. He confessed to Father Oswald that for eleven days he had been without food, said that he had no desire for any, and declared his intention to do without food for the rest of his life. The priest was astonished at this confession; he touched the holy Nicholas with his hands, and could not look enough at him; he saw before him a man with pale lips, thin cheeks, and a body so emaciated that it consisted of nothing but skin and bones. The priest knew then that Brother Nicholas had not acted out of vain glory or from superstitious motives, and, therefore, advised him to continue, for the honor of God, in his pious resolves. For twenty years Nicholas felt no desire for food of any kind, which was indeed a great miracle of God. The whole world was astonished at the fact, and praised the holy man. He revealed to his confessor, Father Oswald, that in receiving the sacred body and blood of Christ during Mass, such wonderful strength was given to him, that he could do without food; and also that in meditating upon the sufferings and death of Christ, he experienced such an inexpressible sweetness, that any kind of food was unnecessary for him.

Thomas, Bishop of Constance, one day visited the pious man, and conversed with him on religious matters. The Bishop, among other things, asked him which virtue he considered the greatest and the most pleasing to God. Brother Nicholas answered that OBEEDIENCE was the greatest of all virtues. The Bishop then took some bread and wine, which he had with him for that purpose, cut the bread in three slices, and commanded him to eat it. Brother Nicholas would not be disobedient, but asked the Bishop to permit him only to eat one piece. After he had consumed one slice, he became very sick, and could not digest what he had eaten, so that the Bishop was struck with fear, and regretted that he had tempted the holy man.

The conversation and conduct of Brother Nicholas were always full of meekness and benevolence; he was also very charitable towards pilgrims. Many persons went to see him, for he was looked upon as a prophet, to whom the future was revealed. Although not a learned man, he was able, by the assistance of divine grace, to converse with the greatest scholars of the age; when asked by persons what they should do in order to obtain heaven, he would say: "Be honest in your dealings, cheat or injure no one, attend strictly to the duties Almighty God has imposed upon you, and you will obtain the same reward as if you served God in solitude; for every one is not called upon to retire



from the world." Brother Nicholas was neither proud nor haughty, but very modest in his demeanor; he spoke gently to every one who came to see him, and when parting from them, he would always say: "*Pray for me.*"

Before he was called to receive his eternal reward, a terrible affliction befell him; but he bore it with the greatest patience. On the eighth day he received the viaticum and extreme unction, and died on the twenty-first of March, in the year one thousand four hundred and eighty-seven, at the age of seventy.

## SS. HERLINDA AND RENILDA. (RENULA.)

(March 22.)

"Christian education."

THE name of the father of these two sisters was Adelhardus, and that of the mother Grimuara; they were persons of high rank, and were very careful in the education of their daughters, so that as their bodies grew in strength, the powers of their mind, their faith, and virtue might increase likewise. The pious parents observed that the hearts of their daughters were filled with great love to God, and therefore resolved that they should be well instructed in the knowledge of their holy faith.

For this purpose the parents sent the two sisters to a convent, where they could learn all that was necessary for this world and the next, and God blessed them in their efforts. The two girls vied with each other as to which should be most zealous in the service of God, most persevering in prayer, most attentive in reading, most perfect in purity, most modest in appearance, most honest in heart, and most fervent in meditation. They were taught how to read, write, and sing, and were also instructed in weaving, sewing, knitting, etc.

Man is endowed with free will, so that it does not always follow, that a man must be wicked because he has been badly educated, or that a man can not be wicked for the reason that he has been carefully brought up; yet experience teaches us that the character of a man is strongly influenced by his early training. It may even be said that parents can do more for their children than they can for themselves, because it is easier to plant good qualities in the heart of a child than in the barren and hardened souls of persons advanced in years. The impression made upon the soul of a young person remains for ever, and is like a tree which grows to be either straight or crooked, just as it has been trained when young. It is, therefore, a sacred duty for parents, and those who have the care of children, to prepare them by a good Christian education for a virtuous life; a Christian education is infinitely more valuable to a child than would be the bequest of a large fortune. The reward of those parents who have

endeavored to enrich the souls of their children with a Christian spirit, and with knowledge adapted to their state of life, is the joy, honor, and assurance of being at some future time united with them in heaven.

As soon as the two sisters had been sufficiently instructed in the convent, they returned to their parents' house. Parents and daughters were possessed with one desire, and that was to attain religious perfection; and they, therefore, determined to erect a convent on their own grounds. After a suitable place had been chosen, they commenced the building of it with such earnestness, that Herlinda and Renilda would carry stone and sand like common workmen. When the convent was finished, the parents resided therein until their happy death took place.

After a while the daughters considered that their former life had not been strict enough for them to obtain eternal salvation, and, therefore, desired to serve God with greater zeal. They were never idle, but were fervent in the praises of God, singing hymns and practising other religious devotions. They occupied themselves also with reading, writing, and the instruction of others, and encouraged one another in the attainment of virtue. Whatever had been taught them in the convent, they now applied to the glory of God and to His divine service. They embroidered vestments in gold and pearl for the church, and as the art of printing was not then known, they illuminated the holy Scriptures and other devotional works. In regard to their deportment it can be said that they were severe and kind at the same time; severe with themselves, but kind and gentle towards others, always assisting the poor, wherever they could be found.

Herlinda and Renilda in the commencement received twelve young ladies into their convent; but after a time many others wished to leave the world, and enter upon a religious life. The two sisters instructed them, and brought them up in the spirit of piety; so that like true daughters of Christ they led a beautiful life in their retirement. They were full of faith and love, always active for the welfare of others, cheerful in giving alms, humble and pure in their deportment, prudent and agreeable in their conversation, fervent in their devotions, and persevering in their holy duties.

When Herlinda felt death approaching, her greatest desire was that the other nuns should continue to advance in perfection, and should grow in holiness. She therefore assembled them all around her, gave them the most affecting admonitions, and impressed upon them the necessity of living for Christ. At the death of Herlinda, Renilda exhibited more joy than sorrow, for she knew that her sister had entered into eternal bliss. Renilda would not permit the body to be buried, but laid it, covered with linen, in the bier upon the ground. The body remained uncorrupted, and always emitted a sweet perfume.

Renilda continued zealously to perform her Christian duties, in order that

with Herlinda she might dwell for ever in heaven. Her death took place a few years after that of her sister, and the sanctity of both has been sufficiently attested, from the fact that none who have ever asked their intercession, have had their petitions refused.

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## ST. LIBERATUS AND HIS FAMILY.

(March 23.,

"Divine Love"

VERY little is known of the Saints whose memory we this day celebrate, but that little is full of instruction, and shows us what a vast difference there is between human and divine love.

Five hundred years after Christ the following events happened in Africa: A respectable physician, named Liberatus, together with his wife and children, were thrown into prison on account of being Christians. They were placed in separate cells, so that they could neither see nor speak with one another. The heathens tried to persuade the wife to renounce Christianity, by telling her that Liberatus had yielded to the commands of the king and had forsaken his religion; but she desired to see her husband before giving them an answer.

From the prison she was taken to the place of execution, where she found her husband and many other persons. Believing what she had heard regarding the apostacy of Liberatus to be true, she grasped him by the hand and said: "Wretched, unhappy man that you are, unworthy of the grace and mercy of God, why do you prefer a moment's comfort to eternal salvation? What good will the gold and silver be to you? Will it save you from the flames of hell?"

"What is the matter, dear wife," answered the husband; "what do you think of me? What is it that you have heard? I shall always remain a Catholic, and shall never resign the treasure of faith I possess."

Thus the falsehood of the heathens was discovered and frustrated. Liberatus with his wife and children were sent into exile, and their cruel persecutors resolved to try their parental affection by separating their children from them. While the children were being forcibly taken from their parents the eyes of Liberatus filled with tears; but his wife, seeing it, reproached him, saying: "Liberatus, do you wish to lose your soul on account of your children? Suppose they had never been born; Christ Our Lord will take care of them, since they also belong to him. Do you not hear that they say: 'We also are Christians!'"



According to a later biographer, we are told that Liberatus and his heroic wife finally suffered martyrdom on the twenty-third day of March.

We have often heard peculiar doubts expressed in regard to the Last Judgment. Some ask if those who were united on earth by the ties of blood and affection are to be separated at the Last Judgment; as, for instance, if the mother is saved and her child eternally lost—are not both unhappy and miserable? Does not the misery of the beloved one cause infinite grief to the mother, who is saved, so that even in heaven she can not enjoy herself? These may perhaps be the questions you will ask.

The answers to these doubts can be found in this Legend. The wife of Liberatus certainly loved her husband and children as much as any woman could love her family; but as soon as the love of God was brought into question, she quietly and courageously resigned her children, and reproached her husband for shedding tears; and when, deceived by false representations, she thought that Liberatus had renounced his faith, she felt indignant, and lost all affection for him, until re-assured by him of his fidelity to the cause of Christ. The love of God, infused by the Holy Ghost into our hearts, absorbs every other love; not that we cease to love our relations, but that we love God more, and on that account we shall soon find it impossible to love those who scoff at religion and who despise the commands of God.

Endeavor therefore to save all those that belong to you; but if you labor in vain for their salvation, rest assured that God will finally preserve your heart from useless affliction and sorrow, from love or grief for those who are lost. But if you are yourself walking in the path of evil, consider well, that if you do not return in time to God, you will not only be separated for ever from your friends and relatives, but that they will lose all affection for you, if they enter heaven and you fall into the yawning gulf of perdition.

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## ST. CATHARINE OF SWEDEN.

(March 24.)

"Pilgrimage."

ST. CATHARINE was a daughter of St. Brigitte, so renowned for the many revelations made to her. The life of St. Catharine was a very singular one. She wished to remain a virgin, but out of obedience to her father she married, when very young, a pious nobleman by the name of Edgar, whom she persuaded to live in continency with her, to which request he cheerfully acceded.

They lived a very holy life, and Catharine, although young, gave her husband much good advice on the manner of attaining Christian perfection, which counsels she had learned from her saintly mother.

St. Catharine laid aside her splendid dresses, and instead of following the fashion of the world, selected modest garments, and in this respect many other noble ladies followed her example. Soon after her marriage her father died, and her mother, St. Brigitte, was by a special revelation told to visit Rome. St. Brigitte was very much troubled, because in that strange and distant city she knew no one. The Lord, however, consoled her, for shortly after her departure her daughter felt such a fervent desire to proceed to Rome, that she became ill. When asked by her husband what was the cause of her depression, she told him her desire. Edgard could not resist the wish of his wife, whom he dearly loved; his only anxiety was, lest some evil should befall her on the journey, for she was only eighteen years of age.

After having crossed the North Sea, she traveled through Germany, Switzerland, and Italy, and arrived at Rome in the month of August. For eight days she sought her mother without finding her, because St. Brigitte was staying at a convent situated some distance from the city; but when at last the mother and daughter met, they spent nearly all their time in visiting the holy places in Rome. After some weeks St. Catharine desired to return home; when by a revelation her saintly mother was commanded to ask her if she would not stay, and divide with her the labor of spreading the kingdom of God.

Catharine declared that she was willing to give up all, even her husband, in order to please Christ. The Lord, however, told her, through St. Brigitte, that her husband had died soon after she left Sweden.

The residence of the Pope had, in the year one thousand three hundred and five, been transferred from Rome to Avignon, in France, and there the Popes continued to reside for seventy years. Catharine was at that time in Rome, and on account of the Pope's removal, such disorders reigned throughout the city, that it was not safe for a woman to walk in the streets even in the daytime. St. Brigitte, therefore, advised her daughter not to make any more pilgrimages, unless well protected. It was very painful for Catharine to remain

at home while her mother was enabled to visit the holy places. In sleep she was reproached for her dissatisfaction, and was told to be obedient to her mother; but once, when in the company of some ladies, she had gone to the church of St. Sebastian, a young gentleman followed her, and it was indeed a wonder that she escaped unhurt. At another time St. Catharine and her mother made a pilgrimage to Assissi, and were obliged, as night overtook them, to stop in an isolated house. Robbers attacked the house, who, seeing the beauty of the virgin, commenced to talk in a manner that showed their vile intentions; but, hearing a noise as if soldiers were approaching, they fled.

As long as St. Catharine remained in Rome, she was very kind to the pilgrims who came from her country; she not only gave them alms, but she edified them also by her holy conversation. She told them especially to meditate on the sufferings of Christ, to keep the commandments of God, and to avoid mortal sin.

St. Catharine spent her life in the practice of charity, poverty, humility, patience, and in loving her neighbor. She finally made a pilgrimage with her mother to Jerusalem, to visit the holy sepulchre of our Lord. St. Brigitte was attacked by fever, from which she never recovered, but died shortly after her return to Rome. St. Catharine carried the remains of her mother back to Sweden, and she herself ended her life in the convent of Wadstena, in the year one thousand three hundred and eighty-one.

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## FEAST OF THE ANNUNCIATION OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN.

(March 25.)

"Veneration of Mary."

AMONG all created beings there is none so venerated as the blessed Virgin Mary. In her honor several festivals are celebrated during the year, in her honor magnificent cathedrals are built, and in all churches, where several altars are erected, we always find one dedicated to the blessed Virgin; in every Mass she is mentioned several times, at Vespers is sung the beautiful "Magnificat," and as often as the Catholics say the Lord's prayer, they add also the "Ave Maria—Hail Mary;" and when in the hundred thousand churches of the Christian world the bells ring the "Angelus," at morn, noon, and night, calling millions



of Catholics to prayer, all kneel, and say the "Angelus Domini—The Angel of the Lord declared unto Mary." Why is this veneration shown?

The holy Scriptures will first answer the question. In the Gospel of this day we find the following: "And in the sixth month, the angel Gabriel was sent from God into a city of Galilee, called Nazareth, to a virgin espoused to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David: and the virgin's name was Mary. And the angel being come in, said to her: Hail, full of grace, the Lord is with thee: Blessed art thou among women. Who having heard, was troubled at his saying, and thought with herself what manner of salutation this should be. And the angel said to her: Fear not, Mary; for thou hast found grace with God. Behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and shalt bring forth a Son; and thou shalt call his name Jesus. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the most High: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of David his father: and he shall reign in the house of Jacob for ever, and of his kingdom there shall be no end. And Mary said to the angel: How shall this be done, because I know not man? And the angel answering, said to her: The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee; and the power of the most High shall overshadow thee. And therefore also the Holy which shall be born of thee, shall be called the Son of God. And behold, thy cousin Elizabeth, she hath also conceived a son in her old age: and this is the sixth month with her that is called barren: Because no word shall be impossible with God. And Mary said: Behold the handmaid of the Lord, be it done to me according to thy word. And the angel departed from her." (Luke 1: 26-38.)

It is to be remarked here, that God showed such honor to Mary as was never before shown to any created being. He salutes her through the archangel Gabriel, who stands before the throne of God. If Mary at that time was worthy of such an honor before the Almighty, she is still; for she was never guilty of committing a sin. What kind of a Christian would you be, if you should refuse to honor what God Himself has honored? You would be in opposition to God, you would be his adversary, and a follower of him whose head was crushed by the seed of the woman.

In the ten commandments of God, our duty towards God is pointed out to us in the three first, and in the seven others our duties towards our neighbor. Among these seven the principal command is: "Thou shalt honor thy father and thy mother," and as Jesus Christ, the Son of God, has most perfectly fulfilled all the commandments, it follows that He also honored His mother. When ascending into heaven, He took with Him His soul, and in that soul the veneration for His mother. Can He then be indifferent whether you venerate His mother or not? If He thought fit to venerate His mother, it will certainly be not displeasing to Him if you also venerate her. Besides, the Saviour says: "He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, abideth in me, and I in him." (John 6: 57.) If, therefore, you have received worthily the holy com-

munion, and have become united with Christ, you must also have veneration for the mother of Jesus, whom He has dwelling with Him for ever in heaven

In reference to the Holy Ghost, we must remember that Mary was the purest, holiest, and most blessed among all women. She was, therefore, in regard to her soul the most beautiful being ever created. Who was the author of her creation? The Holy Ghost. Does it not please the artist, if you look with delight upon his work? Does it not please the architect, if you admire the sublime temple he has built? In a similar manner it is pleasing to the Holy Ghost, when you regard with veneration His spiritual work—Mary, “full of grace, and blessed among women.” We have living proofs of how much the Holy Ghost desires the veneration of the Blessed Virgin. All men who attain a high degree of sanctity, arrive at that state through the power of the Holy Ghost. He is the sanctifier, and dwells and lives in every holy person. The effects of the Holy Ghost, visible in all saintly persons, are meekness, humility, temperance, and love for their neighbor. We find also that all the Saints have cherished a great veneration for the Blessed Virgin, and therefore we can firmly believe that respect for the Blessed Virgin is the operation of the Holy Ghost. When the angel uttered the words: “Hail Mary, full of grace,” it was the Holy Ghost speaking through him.

It is therefore just, that in the Catholic Church the mother of God should be venerated; in showing this veneration the Catholic Church only does what God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost have done. Remember, O Christian, that you are only doing your duty when you venerate and love the Blessed Virgin. Salute her every day, and endeavor in future to do in *spirit* and with your *whole heart*, what you have done before only with *your lips*, and from *habit*. Let your soul be filled with joy, with delight, and with true veneration, when you again repeat the angelic salutation of: “Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee; blessed art thou among women.”

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## ST. BASIL.

(March 23.)

*"Benefit of pious company."*

EVERY Saint is a fruitful branch of the true Vine, Jesus Christ. Of these branches Christ says, that as long as they remain connected with Him, they will bring forth manifold fruits. Every Saint, therefore, will be found to bring forth fruits which are sweet and strengthening in their effects upon others. Such good fruits are the admonitions, good examples, and prayers, wherewith a Saint endeavors to profit his neighbor. It is therefore a great advantage for a congregation to have belonging to it one or more persons who have attained a high degree of perfection, because they are often the means of imparting grace to other members of the congregation; but as man can frustrate the grace of God, in the same manner can he frustrate the good example, the admonitions and prayers of the Saints.

The life of St. Basil will illustrate the above truth.

The Saint lived in Constantinople about nine hundred years after Christ, and led a holy life. His disciple Gregory, who wrote his life, relates many miracles performed by St. Basil, which satisfactorily prove his power with God.

At that time the Roman emperor had a son-in-law, named Saronites, who cherished the design of making himself emperor, to do which it would be necessary for him to put to death seven persons, who stood between him and the imperial throne. By a divine revelation St. Basil was warned of the murderous attempt about to be made, and he thought it his duty to admonish Saronites on the subject, as his fears were aroused, not only for the salvation of Saronites, but also for the safety of the imperial family. Meeting Saronites one day as he was just going into the palace, Basil said to him: "Why does your heart meditate evil against the legitimate government? God has not destined you to ascend the throne; desist from your wicked design, that the anger of God may not come upon you, and you lose all that you now possess!"

On hearing these words, Saronites became furious and commanded the Saint to be cruelly beaten on two days in succession. While Basil was in prison, Saronites had a dream. He saw a great oak-tree in foliage, on the top of which sat a raven, watching the nest of his young ones. He then saw two men with axes in their hand, one of whom said to the other: "This raven, from the noise he makes, gives no rest to the emperor." The other said: "He also has cruelly treated the saintly Basil." Saying these words, they commenced to cut down the tree. When the tree fell on the ground, many persons came with baskets in their hands, to collect the branches and burn them. He also saw the Saint standing near the tree, and saying: "Every tree that doth not yield good fruit, shall be cut down, and cast into the fire." (Matt. 3 : 10.)



Saronites, terrified by this vision, awoke, and at once set the Saint at liberty; but notwithstanding his dream, he failed to be converted, and soon after became ill and died.

The Empress Helena having heard much respecting the sanctity of Basil, sent a messenger to him, asking him to visit her. When Basil arrived at the palace she met him, and expressing her great veneration asked him to pray for her. The Saint blessed her and said: "May Almighty God preserve you for many years to rule over the empire, and may the Giver of all that is good grant you hereafter the heavenly kingdom." The empress replied saying: "I have often desired to see you, holy and venerable Father, and God has fulfilled my wish; I beseech you, continue to pray for me, your servant, that the Lord God may have mercy on me at the day of judgment. The Saint answered: "I will pray for you; but if I pray, and you act in direct opposition to my prayers, they will be without effect; for if one builds up, and the other destroys, all labor will be useless. To Jeremiah the prophet the Lord says: 'Do not thou pray for this people, for I will not hear thee.' (Jerem. 7:16.) We also know that the prayer of the just man availeth much, but the prayers must be assisted by the good works of Him for whom the prayers are offered."

Basil was afterwards invited by the emperor to visit him, and when meeting him Basil reproached him for being an avaricious and sensual man. The emperor received the reproach in an humble spirit, but when he wished to present the Saint with a sum of money, the latter refused to accept any thing from him.

An old woman one day came to see Basil. She was accompanied by a young girl, dressed in a monastic habit. Both made a reverence when he approached them, and asked his blessing. He blessed the old woman, but turning to the young girl, he severely reproached her on account of her wickedness and hypocrisy, and her trying in the dress of a Religious to deceive others. He concluded with the following words: "O, how unclean are you in the sight of God; you are full of impurity." Terrified at what the Saint had said to her, the girl wept and said: "Yes, venerable father, I have committed the sins for which you have reproached me; you have not been deceived in me. Wo is me, poor sinner that I am. My misdeeds have overwhelmed me, and my sins are as numerous as the sands on the sea-shore. Help me, I beseech you, O holy Basil, that I may not be ruined and damned forever."

A pious person who was present, also said to the Saint: "See, how full of sorrow she is. Have pity on her, assist her and pray for her; I am convinced that the Lord will not reject her, if you only intercede in her behalf." But St. Basil answered: "How sad it is to see into the heart! I see Satan looking over the shoulders of this sinner. Why should I pray for her, if she will not abandon her wicked life?" It was afterwards discovered that this woman had

come for the purpose of seducing the Saint, and that after leaving his presence she became worse than she had been before going to visit him.

You see, dear reader, from what we have related to you concerning St. Basil, how pious and holy persons can become a source of health for others; but even the greatest Saint or the most pious priest can not open heaven to those who do not co-operate with them in their efforts. If pious persons belong to the congregation of which you are a member, seek their company; let them teach and admonish you, ask their prayers, and endeavor to follow their teachings and example.

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### ST. JOHN THE HERMIT.

(March 27.)

"Fasting."

THIS Saint was born three hundred years after Christ. Although the son of poor and humble parents, he became so celebrated and was so highly esteemed, that kings and princes would send to him from distant countries, asking for his advice and prayers. The emperor Theodosius never undertook any thing of importance without first consulting St. John.

He worked as a carpenter until he had reached his twenty-fifth year, when he left the world, and submitted himself to the direction of an old hermit, in order to be instructed by him in the way of attaining Christian perfection. While with him, John showed such humility and obedience, that the hermit himself was astonished. One day the hermit drove a stick of wood into the ground, and told John to water it twice a day, that it might grow and give shade to them during the hot weather. John obeyed without a murmur, although he had to walk a long distance to get water. No employment, no bad weather ever prevented him from fulfilling the hermit's command twice a day until at the end of the year the hermit took the dry branch out of the ground.

After having practised virtue with the hermit for several years, John retired into even greater seclusion. On a mountain, far from the world, he chose a rock, which it was difficult to reach. There he built a cell, in which he made only one aperture, serving as a window. Through this window he received necessary food, and replied to those who came to him for advice. Five days in the week he remained alone with God; on Saturdays and Sundays only did he receive visitors of the male sex—no female ever being permitted to see him. In this manner he spent about fifty years, without leaving his cell, without having ever seen a woman, and without receiving any money.

The more John retired from the world, the nearer was he brought to God. He ate very little, and that in the evening after sun-set; and although ninety years old, he never used any food that was cooked, not even bread, but lived only upon fruits.

St. Augustin relates from an authentic source the following fact concerning St. John the Hermit. He says: "A centurion told St. John that his wife desired to see him and receive his blessing; and that for this purpose she had traveled a long distance. The Saint answered that he could not see her, as he would not deviate from his established custom of refusing to see females. When the officer carried this answer to his pious wife, she was not discouraged, but declared that she would not leave the place until she had seen the prophet. The officer returned to John, acquainted him with the determination of his wife and again besought him to see her, otherwise she would die from pain and grief. Finally the Saint said: "Go; your wife shall see me to-night in her sleep, and therefore need not come here." And as he foretold, St. John really did appear to her as soon as she had fallen asleep, and said to her: "O woman, your faith is great; it forces me to come hither to fulfill your request. Nevertheless, listen to what I tell you. Never desire to see the faces of the servants of God, but contemplate rather their lives and their deeds, with the eyes of the spirit, for it is the spirit that quickeneth, the flesh profiteth nothing." (John, 6 : 64.) After having given her the necessary instructions regarding her state of life, he disappeared.

At another time Palladius, a hermit, wished to pay him a visit, and for that end made a journey of eighteen days. While conversing with John, the governor of the province came to see him; the Saint at once turned to him, and left Palladius waiting. The conversation between John and the governor lasted a long time, so that Palladius became impatient, and wished to leave because he thought that he had been treated insultingly by John. The governor in the mean time left, and the Saint called Palladius, and reproached him for his impatience, and said: "Why did you suspect me, as if I had any regard for the high position of the man? Do you not know, that it is written: 'They that are whole need not the physician, but they that are sick.' (Luke. 5 : 31.) You can converse with me and the brothers at any time, but the governor, bound as it were in the fetters of the world, freed himself a few moments from his temporal affairs, in order to see me and to do something for the salvation of his soul. It would have been very wrong had I let him go while I spent my time conversing with you, since you are always employed in trying to save your soul."

The life of St. John was a continual fast. He denied himself all that is pleasing to the heart of man, and ate only what was absolutely necessary to sustain nature. It is astonishing how much more rigidly the Saints observed the fasts than is prescribed by the holy Scriptures or the precepts of the Church. The



Spirit of God dwelling in them, that spirit which aspires after heaven, taught them to despise more and more the world and its pleasures. We will tell you, dear reader, how to spend Lent in a manner agreeable to God. In the first place you should strictly observe the precepts of the Church. Fasting does not consist altogether in abstaining from flesh-meat and food, on the prescribed fast-days, but in restraining also your sensual appetites. You should, for instance, go less into society, cease to indulge in idle conversations, govern your eyes, sleep less, in order to have more time to attend the church services, to pray, and to read spiritual books. Lay aside all novels and newspapers, which only entertain but do not instruct you. Do those things for yourself which others have been in the habit of doing for you. If you have been afflicted, or have met with misfortunes, remember that God has imposed them upon you as a penance, and suffer them patiently, in order to receive your reward.

We will add for your encouragement some words of admonition, which St. John after used: "We must enter through many afflictions into the kingdom of God, because the gate is narrow and the way strait that leads to life, and few there are that find it; therefore we must renounce the little rest we have upon earth, in order to gain eternal rest."

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## ST. MARY OF MALLYE.

(March 23.)

"Signs of Grace"

A WHOLE world is concealed in the soul of man, and many different thoughts, feelings, desires, and resolutions are constantly taking place in it, and good and evil spirits take part in the struggles. What God effects in the soul of man by grace is good, but whatever man does of himself, without divine assistance, is either worthless or wicked. It is, therefore, desirable that we should know how nature and grace manifest themselves. In the "Following of Christ," we find it clearly demonstrated; but even more so in the life of the Saint whose memory we celebrate to-day.

We will compare extracts from the "Following of Christ," (3. Book, Chapter 54,) with historic incidents in the life of one of the Saints, in order that you may see more clearly the nature of grace.

In France there once lived a nobleman by the name of De Mallye, who had a daughter, Mary. Even as a child she showed a disposition to serve God; but we will pass over the time of her youth, and commence with that period of her life when she took up her abode in the city of Tours.

After Mary had spent a portion of her time with devotion in the church, on her return home she would invite all the poor she met to dinner; sick and weak persons, however, and those who were crippled, she led by the hand.

Following of Christ: "*Nature* glorieth in noble place and descent; smileth on them that are in power, flattereth the rich, and applaudeth such as are like itself. But *grace* favoreth the poor rather than the rich, and sympathizeth more with the innocent than with the powerful."

Mary practised severe works of penance upon herself. She always wore next her body a habit made of hair-cloth, fasted three times in the week, took no nourishment on Fridays but bread and water, never slept in a bed, and avoided the company of worldlings and every thing that would distract her thoughts from the contemplation of heavenly things.

Following of Christ: "*Nature* inclineth a man to creatures, to his own body, to vanities, and to running to and fro; but *grace* draweth to God, and to all virtues, renounceth creatures, flieth the world, hateth the desires of the flesh, restraineth wanderings, blusheth to appear in public."

When Mary was one day absorbed in prayer, the Blessed Virgin appeared to her, and kindly admonished her to dress in a plainer manner. She at once changed her garments, had them made according to the commands of the Blessed Virgin, and dressed herself in coarse clothing, out of veneration for Christ, who took upon Himself the form of a servant.

Following of Christ: "*Nature* seeketh to have things that are curious and beautiful, and abhorreth such as are cheap and coarse; but *grace* delighteth in that which is plain and humble, rejecteth not coarse things, nor refuseth to be clad in old garments."

Mary had a great desire to practice evangelical poverty; she therefore voluntarily renounced all her inheritance, and gave up her own house for the use of a convent. Having become very poor, she was regarded with contempt by her friends and relatives; but instead of feeling sad, she rejoiced in imitating Christ in his poverty.

Following of Christ: "*Nature* hath regard to temporal things, rejoiceth at earthly gains, is troubled at losses; but *grace* attendeth to things eternal, and cleaveth not to temporal things, neither is disturbed at the loss of things; is contented with little, for it placeth its treasure and its joys in heaven, where nothing perisheth."

The Saint was one morning on her way to the royal chapel, there to perform her devotions, when one of the courtiers, seeing her dressed meanly, reproached her for it, saying that she should throw such clothes into the fire. The humble servant of God did not think of the insult offered her, but of the Passion of Christ, and prayed according to His example for him who had offended her. Upon another occasion she reproached a young man for using profane language,

who became so enraged, that he threw the Saint upon the floor, and kicked her so unmercifully that for a long time she suffered from his cruel treatment.

Following of Christ: "*Nature* is afraid of shame and contempt, and is irritated at every slight injurious word; but *grace* is glad to suffer reproach for the name of Jesus, and is not exasperated with hard words."

Mary was in the constant habit of visiting prisoners; she consoled them like a mother, administered to their wants, and read to them religious books. When the king was on a visit to the city of Tours, she obtained from him the pardon of many prisoners, and others who were sentenced to death had their sentences commuted through her intercession. She did every thing in her power for the sick and destitute; she gathered healing herbs in the fields and woods, and begged also from pious persons whatever she thought would afford them any relief or pleasure.

Following of Christ: "*Nature* laboreth for its own interest, and considereth what gain it may derive from another; but *grace* considereth not what may be advantageous and profitable to self, but rather what may be beneficial to many."

Mary visited regularly a convent church, and was present at all the devotions held there at regular hours during the day and night. On the vigils of great festivals she remained the whole night in the church, praying before the most holy Sacrament of the Altar; when tired she slept a short time on the steps of the sanctuary. From the length of time which she spent in prayer, her knees became as hard as the soles of her feet.

Following of Christ: "*Nature* willingly receiveth some exterior comfort, in which the senses may be gratified; but *grace* seeketh to be comforted in God alone, and beyond all things visible to be delighted in the sovereign Good."

The queen, when on a visit to Tours, invited Mary to see her. At the appointed hour she presented herself at the palace; but out of modesty did not tell who she was, and that she had been invited by the queen. She was consequently rudely treated by the porter, who even struck her with his cane, and ordered her off, until some one came who knew her. She made no complaints of the treatment she had received, but acted as if nothing had happened. The queen kept Mary a whole week with her. No idle words were spoken between them, but the divine love glowing in the heart of Mary, showed itself so plainly in all that she did and said, that many of the courtiers were led to practice their religion, and to lay aside the vanity and folly to which people of rank were at that time so terribly addicted.

Following of Christ: "*Nature* turneth all things to self; but *grace* referreth all things to God from whom they originally proceed. She teacheth humbly to hide those things which are worthy of praise and admiration, and from every thing and in every knowledge to seek the fruit of utility, and the praise and honor of God."



At that time a dangerous schisma existed in the Church. Two Popes had been elected, each of whom had his adherents. Mary went to the convents and among the people, asking them to pray that this scandal might cease. She exhorted all to praise God in word and deed.

Following of Christ: "*Nature* doth all for her own gain and interest; she hopeth to gain praise or favor; but *grace* requireth no other recompense but God alone for its reward, nor desireth any thing more of the necessities of this life than may serve her to obtain things eternal."

We could relate many other facts from the life of St. Mary de Mallye, especially of the many miracles and cures effected through her intercession. Her own confessor has written her biography, and concludes with the following words:

"In the year one thousand four hundred and thirteen, on the twenty-eighth day of March, between one and two o'clock in the afternoon, this excellent lady, rich in good works, went, after the labors and trials of this miserable life were over, to be with Christ, and to receive from Him the eternal reward which He had promised her, and for which she fought so well."

The chapter of the "Following of Christ" ends thus:

"This grace is a supernatural light, and a certain special gift of God, the proper mark of the elect, and pledge of eternal salvation; she elevateth a man from earthly things to love such as are heavenly, and from carnal maketh him spiritual."

## SS. JONAS AND BARACHIS.

(March 29.)

"Idolatry."

ABOUT three hundred years after Christ, Christianity was introduced into Persia; but the Jews and the unconverted Persians spoke abusively of the Christians to King Sabor, who commenced a terrible persecution against them, in which many thousand persons were cruelly put to death.

There lived at that time in the town of Jasa two brothers, Jonas and Barachis, who served God faithfully, and who instead of fearing persecution, went just where the greatest danger existed. They arrived in Bardiaboc, where nine Christians were imprisoned. Jonas and Barachis having obtained permission from the jailor to visit the prisoners, exhorted them to be firm and to win the eternal crown by suffering martyrdom. They followed their advice, and every one of them was put to death. The two brothers were then accused of disobeying

the commands of the king by refusing to worship the sun, fire, and water, and by encouraging Christians to remain steadfast in their belief. They were therefore brought before the three high-priests, who said: "We conjure you through Sabor, our king of kings, that you answer every question we ask you. Will you consent to obey the king, and worship the sun, fire, and water, or not?" Jonas and Barachis answered: "We conjure you also, to tell us in truth and in sincerity, which of the gods shall we deny, the heavenly or the earthly one? the eternal or the perishable? For we believe in the God who made heaven and earth; we trust not a mortal man, who exists only for a time, and who dies and is buried like other men."

The high-priests became very much irritated at this answer, thinking that the two brothers had insulted the king by calling him a mortal man. They were then separated, so that they should not encourage one another to remain firm in their faith; Jonas was then again brought before the high-priests, and rudely accosted: "Consider what you are about to do, if you worship the gods, the sun, fire, and water, and obey the commands of king Sabor, you will be honorably dismissed, but if not, you shall suffer the severest punishments and the greatest torments." St. Jonas answered: "You may do with me what you will, but do not think that I shall ever renounce my holy faith."

The high-priests were now furious and commanded that Jonas should be scourged. His hands and feet were tied, so that he could not move, and he was beaten with thorny rods, until his body was dreadfully lacerated. While undergoing this cruel treatment, St. Jonas praised God, saying: "Glory be to thee, O God, because Thou hast taken us from this world and hast taught us to love Thee. We thank Thee that we can suffer a little for Thee; and now, O Lord, give us strength to accomplish what Thy Holy Spirit commands, and grant only that we may dwell with Thee for ever."

Covered with many wounds, Jonas was then dragged out by a rope. It was in the depths of winter, and he laid the whole night in the cold and rain.

After this the high-priests assembled and had Barachis brought before them, when they asked: "What will you do; will you worship the sun, fire, and water, as your brother Jonas has done, or do you wish to be put to death?" Barachis answered: "I worship the God whom my brother worships; what you say of him is not true, for he would never renounce his faith. Nothing could induce him to deny his Creator, and to bow down before and worship things created to serve us. If they were to be worshiped, they would not have been made to serve man, but man would have to serve them. It would be disgraceful for the fire to serve us, if it were God; but we see that not only the rich, but the poor also, not only the good, but the wicked, make use of the fire. If fire, therefore, is destined to serve us by the command of Him who made it, it would be unjust to compel us to worship it; by doing so we should thereby deny God, who has made the heaven and the earth and all things contained therein. It is only

right therefore, that glory, adoration and honor should be given by kings, princes, and all spirits to Him who is the King of kings and the Creator of the world, whose mysterious ways no one can comprehend, and whose majesty no one can attain."

The judges, notwithstanding their rage, were compelled to admire the firmness of the Christians, and decided that the next meeting should be held at night, that others might be prevented from becoming Christians, which would be the case if they listened to the bold speeches of the prisoners. After Barachis was again brought before them, and many words spoken on both sides, the judge commanded that two pieces of metal should be heated red-hot, which were placed under the arms of Barachis; he was told at the same time, that if one of the pieces should fall, it would be taken as a sign that he had denied God. The martyr answered: "I fear not your king, and shall not let fall either of the pieces, but shall hold them tightly for the sake of Christ. You may perhaps increase my torments; but whoever goes to war, is ready also to die for his king, in order to obtain glory and honor for the cause he has embraced."

Upon hearing him speak thus, the judges had lead melted and poured into the mouth, nostrils, and ears of the Saint, and then had him taken back to the prison and hung up by one foot.

They afterwards summoned Jonas to appear before them, and said to him: "How do you feel? how did you spend the night in the piercing cold and rain?" Jonas replied: "You may not believe me, but the Almighty never bestowed upon me a better night and sweeter rest; for the meditation I made upon the sufferings of Christ comforted me." The judges said: "But your brother Barachis has denied Christ; why do you remain obstinate?" Jonas answered: "I know that my brother has renounced the devil and all his works, and has given himself up to God alone." The judges replied: "Is it not wiser to deny your God than to lose your life?" Jonas said: "O ye blind and foolish men, consider also which of the two is better, to leave the grain in the barn, in order to protect it against the rain and snow, or to sow it in the field? It is the same with the soul of man: whoever desires to live only for this life, and therefore disregards the commandments of God, shall be thrown into everlasting fire: but he who desires to lose his life for the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, will gain eternal life."

The judges now declared that too much freedom of speech had been allowed to Jonas, and commanded that his fingers and toes should be cut off. After this had been done, they scattered the dismembered members about the floor, and said: "Look, we now sow your fingers; at the time of harvest you will reap many fingers." Jonas answered: "I have no use for many fingers; but God, who has made me out of nothing, will one day give back what you have taken from me."

After the death of Jonas, Barachis was summoned to appear before the



judges, and as he remained firm in the faith in spite of the promises held out to him, they determined to put him to death in the most cruel manner. He was rolled upon sharp thorns; splinters of wood were driven into his flesh, and finally heavy masses of iron were placed upon him, until his body was crushed.

You may, perhaps, dear reader, have read with astonishment of the sufferings and death of the two brothers, and have wondered at the folly of the Persians because they worshiped the sun, fire, and water; but although in theory you applaud the firmness of the martyrs, in practice perhaps you and your whole house have fallen into idolatry. There are three kinds of idols in this world, who have even at the present day more worshipers than the true God. All men who do not love God truly and above all things, worship either *their belly*, the *golden calf*, or *themselves*; these are their idols. He who is addicted to impurity, to gluttony, or to sloth, worships *his belly*; he who loves money more than God, and in order to obtain it, tell lies and commits frauds, worships the *golden calf*; he who takes pleasure in pride and vanity, and thinks more of the praises of men than the love of God, worships *himself*. What difference is there, whether the idol is made of stone or wood; if one worships the sun and moon, or if another worships himself, his passions, and his wealth, instead of God. Any one guilty of either of these sins is an idolater, although he may sometimes go to church. Examine yourself, therefore, dear reader; for many a one who thinks himself a Christian is guilty of a species of idolatry.

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### BLESSED AMADEUS.

(March 30.)

"A holy life possible to all men."

LOUIS, Duke of Savoy, died in the year one thousand four hundred and sixty five. His eldest son, who had reached the age of thirty, and who was married to Jolanda, the sister of the king of France, succeeded him. He convoked the chamber of deputies and received the customary homages. No event of particular importance happened during his reign. He made treaties of peace with the neighboring princes and with his relatives, but was once compelled to go to war with the Margrave of Monteferrata, who had refused to fulfill his obligations. At one time he went to visit his brother-in-law, Louis XI., who received him with the greatest honors, and on account of his presence in Paris all the prisoners of that city were set at liberty, as was then the custom, when one neighboring or friendly prince went on a visit to another. The Duke then concluded a treaty with the city of Venice, according to which treaty, each party was

obliged to keep in readiness four thousand horsemen, in order to be of assistance to one another in time of war. Overburdened with affairs of state, the duke's health gradually declined, and he became so ill that he gave over the administration of the affairs of state into the hands of Jolanda, his wife. The brothers of the duke, however, resisted her authority, and made the duke a prisoner; but Jolanda fled to one of the forts. Upon hearing of her condition, her brother the king of France sent a large army to her assistance; the ambassadors of Switzerland also endeavored to settle the difficulty, so that peace was finally restored. The duke then went to Piedmont to see if a change of air would not be beneficial to him and his shattered health be thus restored: a fatal change however took place, and he died on Holy Saturday, at Vercelli, at the age of thirty-seven. He was buried under the steps of the high altar, and a monument was erected to his memory.

Many persons think that they can only attain sanctity by going into a convent, or by becoming hermits, or at least by entering some religious community: and that it is impossible to lead a truly holy life in the world. To entertain such an opinion is not only wrong, but even dangerous, and is often only an excuse for indulging in sloth and wickedness. It is the will of God that all men should be saved, and that all should be holy; it is also the will of God that there should be different states of life in the world: so that, consequently, we can become holy and save our souls in whatever state it has pleased Him to place us. It is true, that we may be placed in circumstances in which it is difficult for us to lead a sanctified life, for the Lord himself says: "I say to you, it is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of heaven:"—in a subsequent verse, however, he adds: "but with God all things are possible." (Matt. 19 : 24-26.)

We must therefore conclude that it is a most difficult thing for a reigning prince (upon whom rest such terrible responsibilities for the woe or weal of his subjects) to attain heaven; "but with God all things are possible."

The duke whose biography we have related to you, was the blessed Amadeus, who in Savoy is venerated as a Saint.

Amadeus never commenced any undertaking without having first asked in prayer the assistance of Almighty God. He assisted daily at the holy sacrifice of the Mass, and not only spent much time exclusively in devotion, but prayed even when walking in the garden. In order that he might be in a state of grace, he went frequently to confession; and although occupying an elevated position, was never proud, but was friendly and affable to all whom he met. His greatest delight was to assist the poor; he served them, gave them the food prepared for himself, and felt happy in their company, even if they appeared before him in rags. Some of his courtiers remonstrated with him for associating with those whom they termed low and vulgar, and told him that by doing so he compromised his dignity; but Amadeus remembered what the holy Scriptures say

on this point. One day the ambassador of a foreign court asked him if he had many hounds? The duke answered, that if he would call the next day, he would show him how many he had. The ambassador accordingly came, and the duke led him into a room, from which they could see the court-yard, in which was placed a table loaded with different kinds of food, and around which were seated many poor people eating their dinner. Amadeus said: "See, my friend, these are the hounds whom I use in my chase for heaven." The ambassador remarked that there were many wicked persons who only pretended to be poor, and who would rather beg than work; but Amadeus answered: "I do not wish to examine into this point too closely; for if Almighty God should do the same with us, and examine whether we had made ourselves worthy or not of his benefits, there would be but few of us who would receive any thing from his liberal hand." At one time it became necessary to levy new taxes for some pressing exigency. The duke, hearing that it was very hard for the people to pay the taxes, took his heavy gold chain from his neck, and commanded that it should be sold, in order that the poor people might be assisted. The duke did every thing in his power to prevent heavy taxation, and although he spent a great deal of money for the erection of hospitals, churches, and convents, and was always attired as became his princely rank, he nevertheless was very economical as regarded his personal expenditure. He was very frugal in his meals, abolished all unnecessary pomp in his court, and was very particular to have only such persons among his servants as would endeavor to lead a truly Christian life. Lewd and wicked persons were not allowed to remain in his palace.

In conclusion his biographer says: "He was beloved by God and man, since he always endeavored to render unto every man according to his due." When death approached, and after he had settled his temporal affairs, and received the Viaticum, the holy Amadeus said to his wife, children, and officers of state, who surrounded his bed: "Practice justice, love the poor, and the Lord will give you peace in your last hours."

At his funeral the nobles and persons of wealth were attired in penitential garments, but the poor were dressed in new clothes; the one representing the grief of a nation at the death of their prince, and the other their joy at his undoubted reception into heaven. Many instances are recounted to us of miraculous cures effected through the intercession of blessed Amadeus, proving to us thereby the power of his prayers before the throne of Almighty God.

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## ST. ACATIUS.

(March 31.)

"Value of Good Will."

THIS Saint is numbered among the martyrs, although he did not suffer martyrdom, but died, as far as we know, a peaceful death. If you read what is written of him, you will, nevertheless, consider it only just that he should be venerated as a martyr, for he was one in spirit and intention.

Acatius was Bishop of Antioch at the time when Decius, the Roman emperor, persecuted the Christians. He was so faithful and so excellent in the performance of his duties, that he was called by the Christians "The Good Angel." No one ever tried to strengthen the Christians more in their faith than did Acatius, in consequence of which he was imprisoned. We will give you extracts from the document in which his trial is recorded.

The governor, who presided as judge, and who was named Mercian, said to Acatius, who had been brought into court: "You are bound to love our emperor, since you live in the Roman empire." Acatius answered: "The emperor is not respected and beloved by any one more than by the Christians; for we continually pray for him, that he may live long, govern the nations in justice, and that the empire may enjoy peace during his lifetime. We furthermore pray for the welfare of the soldiers, and for the whole country." Mercian replied: "This is all very praiseworthy, but in order that the emperor may be assured of your loyalty, sacrifice to him with us." Acatius said: "I implore Almighty God, who is true and great, for the welfare of my emperor, but he can not ask us to offer sacrifice, nor are we allowed to do so; for we must not show that honor to man which is only due to God."

Acatius clearly demonstrated to the judge that it would be wicked and sinful to imitate such things as were taught concerning the goddess Venus. "Shall I worship gods," he continued, "whom I despise and detest, and who, according to your own laws, have committed crimes punishable with death?" Mercian answered: "The Christians are accustomed to invent many wicked things about our gods; I now tell you that you must either offer sacrifice to them or die." Acatius replied: "The highwaymen act just as you do: they attack the traveler, and tell him to give either up his money or his life; but they do not ask if what they demand is either just or reasonable. The sentence you have passed is of the very same character, because you command me either to do something wrong, or to die. I am not, however, frightened. The law punishes the adulterer, the thief, the murderer, and other criminals. If I were guilty of any of these crimes, I should condemn myself before you could have condemned me; but now I am to be punished because I worship the true God. Such a sentence

is not in accordance with the law, but is most arbitrary. It is written: 'With what judgment you judge, you shall be judged; as you do, so shall be done to you.' " "I have no right to judge in this case, but only to command," said Mercian; "if you, therefore, refuse to obey, your punishment will follow." "And I am commanded never to deny my God," answered Acatius; "if you are obliged to obey the decrees of a man who will soon pass away from this world, and whose body will become the food of worms, how much more should I obey the commands of Almighty God, by whom every thing has been created, and who has said: 'He that shall deny me before men, I will also deny him before my heavenly Father who is in heaven.' " "What I have long wished to know, you have now told me," replied Mercian, "and that is the superstition of your faith, for according to your belief God has a Son." Acatius having answered in the affirmative, Mercian then asked who was the Son. "The Word of truth and grace," said Acatius. "Is that His name?" asked Mercian. "You did not ask me His name, but only what He was," answered Acatius; "if, however, you really wish to know His name, it is JESUS CHRIST." Mercian then endeavored to persuade Acatius to renounce his faith, and proposed to him the doctrine of the Kataphrygians. A certain Montanus had promulgated various erroneous opinions, and had left the Catholic Church. Those who embraced the false doctrine were called Kataphrygians, or Montanists. Thinking that the Kataphrygians were a very strict branch of the Christians, as some of their rules were very severe, the pagan Mercian expected that their example would make an impression upon Acatius, and said: "Look at the Kataphrygians, persons of strictly religious habits; they have been induced to offer sacrifice to the gods. Obey you also. Unite all the Catholic Christians, and embrace the religion of our emperor; let all under your care come hither." "The Christians are not to be governed by me in such things," answered Acatius, "but by the commandments of God. They listen to me, when I tell them to do what is right; they would, however, despise my words if I should tell them to do wrong."

The above record was sent to the emperor Decius, who read it, and the answers of St. Acatius pleased him so much that he laughed, and ordered him to be set at liberty.

The Greek Church, in celebrating the anniversary of his death, still holds the tradition that Acatius, after having been liberated, converted many heathens; that he became famous for his teachings and miracles, and finally died in peace.

It was only by the providence of God that Acatius was not put to death, on account of having so freely confessed his faith. All that is essential to make a martyr is found in the character of Acatius, for he firmly confessed the Christian faith, with the expectation and determination of suffering death for it.

Although he died in peace, Acatius has been received into heaven with the

same honor as if he had died a martyr, for God accepted his good intention. Our Saviour expressly inculcated this doctrine when He declares that the poor widow, with her two mites, had cast more into the treasury, than did the rich with all their gold and silver; (Mark 12 : 43.) for the widow exhibited more good will by giving all she had, than do the rich who give but little out of their abundance.

Endeavor, therefore, dear reader, above all things to cultivate within your heart a desire to suffer, if it is the will of God, and He will reward your pure intention.

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# LEGENDS.

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## ST. HUGO.

(April 1.)

"The Dying Christian."

THIS Saint, on account of his great intellect and piety, was made Bishop of Grenoble when only twenty-seven years of age. He led such an eminently holy life, that after his death Pope Innocent II. commanded Guigo, the Prior of the Carthusians, who had been a friend of St. Hugo, to write the life of the Saint, in order that all Christians may be edified.

Guigo fulfilled the Pope's order, and what he has written we still possess.

The life of every Christian should be, as it were, a constant preparation for death; the conduct of St. Hugo, therefore, not only through life, but even in his last sickness may be of special instruction and edification to us. He had, before entering upon the duties of his episcopal office, and even until the last hour of his life, temptations of a very peculiar character. On that account he did not wish to accept the mitre, until the Pope himself consoled him by assuring him that God had permitted many other saintly persons to be tormented in a like manner. In his last sickness, however, all these temptations ceased, so that he was enabled to occupy himself undisturbedly with God.

There was once another religious person similarly afflicted during her lifetime, and who felt the greatest dread of death and judgment; but when death approached, her fears vanished, and she waited with feelings of great resignation and joy the moment of her dissolution. At such a time is shown the great difference between the man of the world and the true Christian. The Christian may have had many temptations during his life, but when death approaches, they cease; or if the evil one still continues his assaults, his power becomes

weaker as the breath of the dying Christian grows faint, and in his soul faith and love finally triumph over the desperate attacks of the enemy. God, who is good and true, will not forsake the Christian in the last combat, who has served Him faithfully for many years. How different is it with the last hour of the worldly man. Even after having received the last Sacraments, he is often in danger of losing the fruits thereof by the snares set for him by the evil one; for at the moment of death, or in severe sickness, man is sometimes so reduced in body and mind, that it is almost impossible for the soul not accustomed to combat, to resist the temptations to infidelity or despair.

Owing to the nature of his disease, the memory of St. Hugo was almost entirely destroyed; but only in such a manner that he knew nothing of temporal or worldly things. He remembered only what belonged to God and religion. During the whole day he recited litanies, psalms, passages from the Bible, and prayers, and one night he recited the Lord's prayer three hundred times. From this fact it was easy to be seen with what his heart was filled.

In old age and in sickness disagreeable things are more difficult to bear than in the days of youth and health. We, therefore, very often see old and sickly persons cross, and sometimes unreasonable; but when the soul is sanctified, the love and peace of God triumph over bodily discomforts, so that we seldom see a true Christian whimsical and capricious. St. Hugo never gave commands to those who attended him in his sickness, but would ask them to do this or that for him for the love of God; and if he ever thought that he had offended any one, he accused himself of it, and would weep tears of sorrow.

There are some persons who in sickness think of nothing but their sufferings, and who allow the time to pass away without any benefit to their souls, until death leaves it no longer in their power to do any thing. Nothing is more impressive than to hear a dying man give good and wholesome advice to those who surround his bed. St. Hugo admonished the clergymen and laymen who came to see him in his last illness, according to their position and circumstances. To a rich man who knelt with the rest around his bed in order to receive his blessing, he said reprovingly, that he would damn himself on account of the unjust taxes he had demanded from his people. The rich man was surprised to hear such a reproach from one who might almost be counted as among the dead, and he felt convinced that God must have revealed it to the Saint; he confessed that he had imposed heavy taxes throughout his estates, but that they had not as yet been collected, and he promised not to levy them, after the warning he had received from St. Hugo.

Despite his great sanctity, and the many merits which he had gathered in a long life, St. Hugo had very little confidence in himself, and was full of humility. He earnestly begged his friends to pray for him, and when asked what they should pray for in particular, he answered: "That God may destroy in me all worldly desires, and kindle within me the fire of love." Having very

often asked the lay brothers of the convent, who nursed him, to pray for him, accusing himself of being a sinner, and unworthy of the benefits of God, they said to him one day: "Why do you grieve so much, reverend Father? You have not committed murder, nor perjury, nor any other crime." The Saint answered: "That does not profit me any thing, since concupiscence and vanity alone suffice to damn man, if the divine mercy of God should not interfere."

The biographer of St. Hugo concludes as follows: "In the year one thousand one hundred and thirty-two after Christ, on the first day of April, St. Hugo died, in the eightieth year of his age, and the fifty-second of his ordination. He was distinguished among the Bishops of his time for his extraordinary sanctity, and when he died, left peace to the Church and to the people over whom he presided as Bishop."

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## ST. FRANCIS OF PAULA.

(April 2.)

"Human greatness."

A **WORLDLY** man looks upon poverty as a curse, although it may be united with great piety, and imagines that it must be perfect happiness to be numbered among the princes of the earth. In the life of St. Francis de Paula we shall see in what true greatness and honor consist.

St. Francis was born about four hundred years ago, in Paula, a little town in southern Italy. From his very youth he led a strict and holy life. Some men have a desire for worldly pleasures, such as eating and drinking, money and other temporal goods, honor, and respect. St. Francis, on the contrary, fervently desired to be secluded from the world. From his youth he never used meat, eggs, or milk, but lived in entire poverty and obscurity. His eminently severe and holy life not only attracted the attention of those who knew him personally, but even in other countries mention was made of it.

At the same time there lived a powerful king in France, Louis XI.; but the hour came when he was obliged humbly to acknowledge that a king is a miserable, wretched man. He became ill, but clung to life and worldly power, and thought it impossible that he could be separated from them. He paid his physician an enormous salary (ten thousand dollars a month), in order that he might do his utmost to restore him to health; and he gave large donations to the Church, as if he thought that the assistance of God could be bought with money. The king then remembered what he had heard of the great sanctity of St. Francis of Paula, and hoped to have a miracle performed on him by the



Saint. With that intention he sent to Calabria, and invited the Saint to pay him a visit, promising to make him a magnificent present; but St. Francis declared that he wanted nothing of this world, and therefore did not come, for he knew that the king only desired him to perform a miracle, and restore him to health. King Louis then sent a messenger to the king of Naples, begging him to induce St. Francis to accept his invitation, but in vain; for St. Francis declared that he did not wish to tempt God, and travel twelve hundred miles, in order to strengthen a king in his attachment to the world and to life. The king however was not to be discouraged, but sent to the Pope, asking him to intercede in his behalf; whereupon the Pope wrote two letters to St. Francis, who, not wishing to disobey the supreme head of the Church, finally set out for France.

When the Saint arrived, looking like a poor and unlettered man, the king treated him with as much honor as if he had been the Pope; he even fell down on his knees before the humble Francis, beseeching him to pray for him, that his life might be prolonged. The king said to him: "I wish especially to know from you, whether I shall ever be cured of this disease or not." St. Francis answered: "Your majesty, we must submit to the will of God, in whose hands are life and death; and it is wicked to attempt to fathom His mysteries, if He does not Himself reveal them. I at first refused to come, because I loved my secluded life; but since I thought it was pleasing to Almighty God, I have obeyed the summons, and have come to tell you that you have not long to live, and you should therefore pay particular attention to the state of your soul and to the welfare of your kingdom."

The king had a room prepared for St. Francis, and conversed daily with him; but after a while a courtier, filled with envy at the influence exercised by St. Francis over the king, pretended to doubt the humility of the Saint. The king's doubts respecting the sincerity of St. Francis were soon aroused, and he determined to test him. He therefore sent him a magnificent dining-table, ornamented with gold and silver, under the pretext of furnishing his room. St. Francis refused to accept the present, saying: "Return it to the king in my name; for such splendid furniture is not fit for the apartment of a poor hermit; a wooden platter is good enough for me." The king then sent a large number of tin-plates to his room, but the Saint again refused to receive them. Under the cloak of devotion they again sought to tempt him; and for that purpose sent him a statue of the Blessed Virgin, made out of pure gold, and worth several thousand ducats, but St. Francis returned the statue to the king, saying that he had no devotion for any thing made of gold and silver, but rather preferred a paper picture of the Blessed Virgin.

Although astonished at such conduct, the king was not yet convinced of the disinterestedness of the holy hermit. He therefore sent the golden statue to him again, and told him that if he did not wish to receive it as a present, he

should have it melted into money and distribute it among the poor. St. Francis answered: "The king has his own almoner, who can attend to such matters better than I."

Urged on, as it were, by Satan, the king persevered in his efforts to tempt the Saint, and one day he came himself into the room of St. Francis with a sack filled with ducats, and offered it to him as his contribution towards the erection of a convent. St. Francis, however, who like St. John the Baptist, lived a most austere life, had the courage to tell the truth to the king, and said: "It would be far better and more honorable in your majesty to give back the possessions you have obtained by force and injustice, and not oppress your impoverished subjects by new and insupportable taxes, than to give alms from stolen property. The salvation of the soul can only be attained by true and honest means."

The prayers and continued admonitions of St. Francis of Paula finally prevailed with the king, who repented, and became more attentive to his duties as a Christian. He felt such compunction for his sins, that he scourged himself, and wept bitterly for having offended God, and when death at last approached, he recommended himself and his children to the prayers of St. Francis.

With no confidence in himself did this once powerful king go to meet his eternal Judge; and if he found grace before the throne of God, it was due only to the mercy and compassion of the Saviour. His own chamberlain, Comenes, who wrote a life of the king, concludes thus: "This great king suffered much and labored much, but nevertheless was obliged to leave all his earthly possessions, and could not prolong his life for even one single hour, although he made every effort to do so. I have known him, and was his servant in the bloom of his age, and when he was at the height of his power; but I never saw him when he was not oppressed with care and anxiety. Would it not have been better for him to have cared less for the world and to have guarded against offending God and oppressing the people?"

Of St. Francis, the poor hermit, on the contrary, the following is written by one who knew him personally: "Francis, the man of God, had the *faith* of the *Patriarchs*, from the fact of his leaving his nation, country, and relatives. He was like a second Abraham, to whom was said: 'Go forth from thy country and from thy kindred;'—he had the *spirit* of the *Prophets*, for he foretold many things of the future, and wept bitterly when he saw in spirit the Christians threatened with war, famine, and pestilence; he had the *zeal* of the *Apostles*, for in all things did he seek the honor of God and the salvation of souls. He was very attentive in his prayers, worked incessantly, ate sparingly, and took but little rest. He always wore a girdle made of coarse hair next to his body, scourged himself frequently, and was most rigid in the observance of his fasts and vigils. He sympathised with the poor and with all who were distressed in

soul or body, and was oppressed with sorrow at seeing so many sinners continue in their wickedness, thus losing their eternal salvation.

In comparing the powerful king Louis XI. with Francis the poor hermit, in which do you find true greatness? Even the world has passed judgment upon the two. Louis the king is seldom thought of; but princes and nations, after the death of St. Francis, requested the Pope to canonize him, and congregations and churches have chosen him to be their patron.

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## SS. AGAPE, CHIONIA, AND IRENE.

(April 3.)

"Reading."

THESE three Saints were sisters, and belonged to the province of Thessalonica, to the Christians of which province St. Paul addressed two of his epistles, which are still to be found in the holy Scriptures. From what is related of these holy sisters in the acts of the martyrs, it is evident that their father and their husbands were heathens; notwithstanding which the sisters showed great virtues, a pure love to God, and a firm hope of heaven. Their names corresponded with their lives; in the Greek language *Agape* means *pure love*; *Chionia*, the *snow-white*, and *Irene*, the *peaceful*. They occupied their leisure time in reading the holy Scriptures, written upon rolls of parchment, for at that time the art of printing was not known.

When Diocletian ordered a persecution of the Christians in the year three hundred and three after Christ, he commanded especially that the holy Scriptures, wherever found, should be burned. The three sisters resolved not to deny their faith, but determined to save their lives as long as they could do so without committing sin. They left, therefore, their homes, their relatives, and property, taking with them only the holy Scriptures, and concealed themselves in a high mountain, where they lived without shelter of any kind. After some time they returned home, hoping that the persecution had abated; but to their sorrow they found it impossible to read the holy Scriptures without exercising the greatest caution, because in their own husbands they discovered the persons whom they had most reason to dread.

Notwithstanding their precautions, they were finally detected and thrown into prison, and their books were taken away from them and consigned to the flames. The women were then commanded to eat the meat of the sacrifices, as a sign that they were willing to deny their faith; but they refused, and for that reason were brought before the governor Dulcetius. He first addressed Agape,



asking her in what she believed, and the heroic Christian replied: "I believe in the living God, and do not wish to lose the good conscience I have obtained by practicing the duties of my holy religion." The governor then turned to Chionia, and said: "What have you to say?" Chionia answered: "All that I have to say is, that I believe in the living God, and for that reason I have not obeyed the command of the emperor." Irene, when asked why she had not complied with the imperial decree, replied: "I was afraid of offending God."

When other Christian women, who were imprisoned on account of their faith, and who were expected to deny their religion, had given similar answers, the governor again turned towards Agape, and asked her: "What is your final determination? Are you willing to obey the emperor?" "I shall never deliver myself up to Satan," replied Agape; "all your words will not deceive me." The governor then addressed Chionia, saying: "What determination have you come to?" "My sentiments have not changed," was her answer. "Who induced you to believe in such follies?" asked the governor. "We are indebted to Almighty God for the holy faith we profess, and to His Son Jesus Christ, our Lord," was the reply of Chionia.

When pronouncing the sentence, the judge said: "You are bound to submit to the decrees of the emperor; but because you have, in spite of all warnings and threats, remained obstinate and disobedient, and gloried even in your wicked Christian name, I shall punish you according to the law. In consequence therefore of the stubbornness shown by Agape and Chionia, in opposition to the divine mandate of our emperor, we condemn them to be burned alive; Irene, however, will remain in prison until further orders."

After the two sisters had suffered martyrdom, the house of Irene was searched, and a large number of sacred writings found. The governor had her again brought before him, and reproached her for it, but offered to pardon her if she would worship the gods. Irene answered: "I never shall do such a wicked thing, and I vow before Almighty God, who has created heaven and earth, the sea and all that is contained therein, to remain firm in my faith." When sentencing her, the governor said: "Although you deserve death, since those bad books were found in your house, I decree another punishment for you. You shall be exposed in a house of ill-fame, and receive nothing for your daily food but bread; you shall be watched by soldiers, so that you can not leave the house for a moment."

This cruel sentence was executed; but the Lord protected the heroic Irene against any disgrace. As long as she was in the house, no one ever acted improperly towards her, and not even an impure word was spoken in her presence. After a while the governor had her brought again before him, and asked her if she wished to persevere in her obstinacy. Irene answered: "I remain firm in my determination, it is not obstinacy, but duty and love towards God." The governor then sentenced her to be burned alive as her two sisters had been.

We see how these three Christian women with fervent zeal read and preserved the holy Scriptures, thereby exposing themselves to the greatest danger. They only read them secretly, because it was not safe to do so in the presence of their husbands and servants; and although the reading of the Scriptures was punishable with death, they still kept them. It was from the sacred writings they received the spirit, courage, and strength to suffer for the faith, and to die the glorious death of martyrs.

We are enabled to judge of the disposition and character of a man by the books he reads. The contents of these books are for him what oil is to the lamp; they fortify and strengthen him the more. If you are religiously disposed, you will prefer to read books of devotion, and you will advance daily in piety; but if you are worldly and sensual in your tastes, you will prefer to read exciting novels, or such books and newspapers as inculcate infidelity and civil anarchy. There are young persons, however, who do what SS. Agape, Chionia, and Irene did, that is to say, they conceal the books which they read from their relatives, but only because their books are not fit to be read, and their guardians would only be doing their duty if they should cast such works into the fire. Of one thing we may be sure, and that is that immoral books effect the ruin of man quite as quickly as bad company.

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## ST. ISIDOR.

(April 4.)

"The Christian Bee."

FOUR hundred years after Christ, Spain was invaded by barbarous tribes of Vandals, Alans, Sueves, and Goths. These hordes of robbers not only devastated the country, but greatly endangered religion, because the Goths had embraced the Arian heresy, and denied the doctrine of the most blessed Trinity. It was at this time that God raised up St. Isidor to guide and protect his Church in the hour of danger and religious darkness.

St. Isidor was the son of noble parents, who had to flee on account of their faith. Even Carthagera, his native city, had been destroyed by the Goths. Destined by God to enlighten the world through his learning, St. Isidor was sent to college; but the difficulty of becoming a learned man seemed to him so great, that he was almost discouraged. Once, when resting by the side of a well, he saw a block of wood deeply indented by the constant drawing of the rope over it, and near by a stone very much hollowed out. He asked a woman who was just drawing water, by whom this had been done. The woman said

that the indenture in the block of wood was caused by the rope passing over it so frequently, and that the cavity in the stone had been made by the incessant dropping of the water. Then the youth said to himself: "If such impressions can be made upon wood and stone, why should not my mind become gradually enlightened by indefatigable study?"

He attained an extraordinary degree of learning and was thoroughly conversant with the Latin, Greek, and Hebrew languages, and excelled also in philosophy, jurisprudence, oratory, and in all the sciences which were taught in that age. He was the most learned man of his time, and to his great knowledge was added a pious and virtuous life.

In all times we find men endeavoring to obtain knowledge, but when we ask why they labor to attain it, we discover that the desire of praise alone animates them, or the wish to be considered learned by their fellow-men, or else it is an insatiable thirst for the possession of knowledge, just as many people eat, not for the purpose of nourishing and strengthening their bodies, but for the sake of indulging in gluttony. It was not so with St. Isidor; the rich treasures of his learning were applied to the honoring of God and extension of His divine kingdom upon earth.

The brother of Isidor was the Bishop of Seville, and he too is numbered among the Saints of the Catholic Church; after his death Isidor succeeded him, and as Bishop accomplished a great deal for the restoration of faith and morals. He was especially attentive to the clergy, whom he assembled around him from far and near, in order to instruct them more in the knowledge of divine things. But they came even uninvited, not only to hear, but also to see their most venerable father. He, therefore, built outside of Seville a magnificent convent, in which he himself, together with other learned men, instructed clergymen and those who desired to become learned men in all the necessary sciences; for he justly considered the want of a solid knowledge of the holy Scriptures as the principal cause for the springing up of heresies. Other convents were also built by him, and he took care that a truly spiritual life was led by all who became the inmates of them.

St. Isidor, however, was not satisfied with propagating the holy Catholic faith in his diocese alone; he endeavored to work for the kingdom of heaven even among other nations, and for that purpose wrote letters, and sent messengers to all places which he could not himself visit. He wrote many books of instruction and devotion, a great part of which have been preserved.

During the lifetime of St. Isidor several Councils were held in Spain over which he presided, where many important and wholesome decrees were passed. In one of the Councils he had a public disputation with an heretical Bishop whose arguments he refuted so thoroughly, that the heretic declared himself conquered, after which he returned to the true faith.

In regard to the death of St. Isidor, an eye-witness, and one of his disciples,



Redemptus, relates the following facts: "Knowing that his end was fast approaching, he gave daily for the space of six months such abundant alms to the poor, that it occupied his time from sun-rise to sun-set in distributing them. When his fever increased, and his stomach refused to retain food, he sent for his two Suffragan-Bishops, and desired them to have him carried into the Church, where the poor, the rich, the clergy, and the laity gathered around him; and such were the lamentations and weeping that every one present was in tears. When in church, the Bishops, at his request, clothed him in sack-cloth, and sprinkled his head with ashes; the dying Bishop, with his arms lifted up towards heaven, then said: "O God, who knowest the hearts of men, and who didst pardon the publican who stood afar off in the temple, striking his breast, accept at this hour my humble confession; blot out from Thy remembrance the innumerable sins which I have committed, and consider not the evils and transgressions of my youth. Thou, O Lord, hast not commanded penance to be done by the just, who have not sinned, but by sinners like me, whose sins are as numerous as the sands on the sea-shore. Thou hast said that when the sinner would turn from his evil ways, Thou wouldst forget all his iniquities; remembering these words, therefore, with confidence and hope I cry unto Thee, whose heaven I am not worthy to behold on account of my many sins. Be nigh unto me, O God, give heed to my supplication, and grant me the forgiveness I ask for.' After finishing this prayer, he received the Holy Eucharist, sighing deeply over his own unworthiness. He then turned to the clergy and the people assembled in the church, and asked pardon of all if he had been uncharitable, or angry, or if he had given them bad advice. Four days afterwards he died, in the peace of God."

We will now relate a little incident in the youth of St. Isidor. When a babe, Isidor was carried by the nurse into the garden, and there left among the flowers and plants. After some time his father, walking through the garden, had his attention drawn to the loud humming of a large swarm of bees. He went to the place, and saw the bees creeping over the face of his child, and going in and out of his mouth as if it had been a hive. The father took the child in his arms, and the bees at once flew away. This was a beautiful omen that this child should one day, like a bee, suck in the honey of divine wisdom from the holy Scriptures, and that many Christians at some future time, should hear from his lips words of sweet counsel and instruction; for the bee is the emblem of a Christian.

The brain of man is always busily working either for good or for evil; the thoughts of a worldly man are like wasps, flying constantly around, but never bringing back any honey; the thoughts of a Christian are like bees; they fly up to God, to Christ, and to His Saints, sucking in honey as it were by pious meditation, and carrying it into his heart, from which it afterwards comes forth in the shape of godly thoughts and deeds.

The wasp consumes the honey which it finds, and does not bring it to its nest; the bee, however, seeks honey and makes wax, not so much for its own use, but rather to preserve it. The worldly man uses whatever the world contains, without ever thinking of God or of eternity; the Christian, on the contrary, uses in moderation the things of the world, and does not consider them all that is worth living for, but endeavors to make good use of them for eternity. The bee labors not for itself, but in unity with others, and for the general welfare; in the same manner the Christian considers that he belongs to a great community, to the Catholic Church, to the State, to the congregation, to his family; he, therefore, has a regard not only for his own profit, and for his own salvation, but also for the common good of all. The Saviour, in speaking of the Last Judgment, compares the good and the wicked to sheep and rams. In the same manner can we compare them with bees and wasps, who outwardly look alike, but whose dispositions and natures are very different. Let us imitate the industrious bee, and resolve never to spend an idle moment, but to labor earnestly for the salvation of our souls.

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### BLESSED JULIANA.

(April 5.)

“Corpus Christi.”

Do you wish to know the day upon which the children of every Catholic congregation enjoy themselves most, and when the hearts of all true and devout Christians are filled with joy, when the most beautiful and the best the Church possesses is brought forth, and the services are not only held within the walls of the Church, but in the streets of the city, and the whole place become like one vast Church? It is upon the festival of Corpus Christi, celebrated in commemoration of the institution of the most Holy Eucharist. Although one of the last of the feasts instituted by the Church, it is celebrated with the utmost pomp and solemnity in all Catholic countries. The commemoration of the institution of the most Holy Eucharist has been observed at all times in the Catholic Church; but Holy Thursday is a day specially set apart for its commemoration. Holy Thursday is at the same time a day of sorrow, because on it the sufferings of our Lord began, who died on the day following. For that reason it could not be celebrated with joy, although upon that day God bestowed upon us a gift more valuable than any thing contained in either heaven or earth,—nothing less than His own precious body and blood. The Church, therefore some hundred years ago, saw fit to appoint a day for its solemn commemoration, which day is

called *Corpus Christi*. The principal reason for doing so is to be found in the following facts, related to us in the life of the Blessed Juliana.

In a convent of Liege in Belgium, there lived, about six hundred years ago, a pious virgin named Juliana, who had an extraordinary love for Christ, and was so strict in the practice of her holy religion, that many things which were looked upon by worldly people as void of evil, were regarded by her as exceedingly sinful.

Blessed Juliana possessed a great devotion for the most Holy Eucharist, and earnestly desired to attend Mass daily, but it was not at that time celebrated every day in the convent; she therefore attended the holy sacrifice of the Mass in a spiritual manner in a retired part of the convent.

When receiving Holy Communion, she was filled with heavenly grace, so that her soul melted like wax in the furnace of divine love. She desired to be left alone for the whole week after she had received it, and refused to see any visitors during that time. She meditated upon the Passion of Christ with such fervor and profound love, that tears would stream from her eyes; sometimes even in the church she could not restrain herself from crying out aloud, so that she had to be taken out, in order to prevent any disturbance in the congregation. She never could speak or hear of the Passion of Christ without experiencing the most tender feelings of compassion.

Living thus entirely in and for God, she practiced upon herself the most incredible austerities; she took food only once a day, and then only towards evening; she slept so seldom, that it excited wonder how any one could live who allowed so little time for rest.

Even in her youth Juliana had a vision regularly during her prayers. She saw the full moon shining brightly, but with one dark spot upon it. She entreated our Lord in prayer to enlighten her as to the meaning of what she had seen, and it was revealed to her that the moon represented the Church, but by the imperfection of the dark spot was indicated the want of one feast in the festive cycle of the Church, which it was His wish to have observed by Christians. He desired that in memory of the most Holy Eucharist a feast should be celebrated once in a year with greater solemnity than could be used during Holy Week, which time is exclusively set apart for meditation upon the sufferings of Christ. The Blessed Juliana was told to celebrate this feast first by herself, and then with other pious and humble persons, but she was finally commanded to announce it to the whole world.

Juliana was struck with terror at what had been revealed to her, and humbly begged of Christ to charge holy and learned priests with the task of making it known to the world, who by their authority as priests could easily further so great an undertaking; but the Lord insisted that she should obey His command. When she again begged to be dispensed from the duty, she heard a voice using the following words from the Scripture: "I confess to thee, O Father, Lord



of heaven and earth, because Thou hast hidden these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them to the little ones." (Luke. 10 : 21.) Twenty years passed away. Juliana was constantly admonished to invite the world to participate in the solemn celebration of the most Holy Eucharist; but she prayed incessantly with sighs and tears that the Lord would impose the charge upon some one else; it even happened that in her distress she was seen to shed tears of blood. At last she felt that it would be very wicked to delay any longer in fulfilling the express will of God, and she therefore determined to do as she had been commanded.

It is necessary, however, to be very prudent in regard to visions and revelations, because we are not always sure that they come from God. Juliana therefore made known her vision to an excellent and pious clergyman, begging him to consult about it with other prominent Bishops and theologians. This was done; the clergyman mentioned it also to James of Troyes, who afterwards became Pope Urban IV., to the Chancellor of Paris, and to many other learned and pious persons. They all agreed that it was not contrary to the law of God, but that a special feast of the most Holy Eucharist would further the honor of God and the salvation of the faithful.

Juliana was strengthened in her undertaking from the fact that another pious nun, named Isabella, had also received a revelation that the institutions of such a feast would be pleasing to Almighty God. She communicated the vision to Juliana, without knowing that Juliana had also been commanded to make the will of God known in regard to the new festival.

Contradictions and mockery, however, soon made their appearance, even learned ecclesiastics denounced the so-called innovation, and Juliana was often laughed at as a visionary: but all this did not deter her from urging them to establish the feast. She had before delayed out of humility, and had prayed that God would spare her from the task of making it public, but she prayed now with her whole heart and soul for its advancement. The Bishop of Liege was the first to institute the feast in his diocese; but he died before his will had been accomplished. At that time Cardinal Hugo was sent by the Pope to Liege; he had been the former Superior of the Dominican convent at Liege, and knew of the revelation of Juliana. Cardinal Hugo then instituted the feast, and it was for the first time celebrated in the church of St. Martin at Liege in the year one thousand two hundred and fifty-two, on which occasion a great many persons were present; he also commanded that in future it should be celebrated in all the churches of the district over which the apostolic Legate presided.

As Juliana was the most active in establishing the beautiful and solemn feast of Corpus Christi, so did she also receive the honor of suffering the most for it. She was superior of a convent, and was falsely accused by a wicked person, of having squandered the money of the convent for the celebration of the feast of Corpus Christi. Many inhabitants were so incited against Juliana that

they forcibly entered the convent, destroyed what they could find, and with curses on their lips searched for the Superior, but could not find her. Juliana believed it to be her duty, under the circumstances, to save her life by escaping; but having returned to the convent, the persecution again commenced, especially as Bishop Robert had died.

The angry mob threw stones at her, and destroyed the chapel where she usually prayed. She could no longer remain in Liege, and fled therefore to another convent, but from there also she was expelled by the intrigues of her enemies. Finally she went with some of the sisters, who did not wish to be separated from their Superior, to a convent in Namur, where she also had much to suffer; but in all her poverty, distress and persecution, Juliana praised and thanked God the more, because she was allowed to suffer for Him. How the spirit of Christ dwelt in her, was shown by the desire which she sometimes expressed, to die twice, if thereby her enemies could obtain eternal salvation. She found it impossible to remain in Namur, but the pious pastor of Fosse gave her a small house next to the Church. She soon after became very ill, but at Easter she left her bed and asked to be carried into the church, in order to take leave, as she said, of the sanctuary. There she received with the greatest devotion Holy Communion, and remained in church until sun-set. She died on a Friday, at the same hour in which our Saviour gave up His spirit, having reached the age of sixty-six, just double that attained by our Redeemer.

As Jesus Christ Himself could only by great sufferings and sorrows prepare for us that most precious of gifts—the Holy Eucharist, so only could His servant Juliana by labor and persecution obtain the establishment of a feast in its honor.

When we therefore yearly celebrate this beautiful day with processions, with all manner of decorations, with chanting and ringing of the bells, with praises and thanks to God for the inestimable gift of His own body and blood, it would be no more than just, if in gratitude and veneration we should remember her, whom the Lord employed for the institution of this glorious feast.

After her death Pope Urban IV., in the year one thousand two hundred and sixty-four, at the urgent request of Eva, a pious hermit and a friend of Blessed Juliana, established this Feast for the whole church, which was afterwards confirmed by Popes and Councils, and which will be observed as long as the Catholic Church exists, that is, until the end of the world.

## ST. NOTKERUS.

(April 6.)

"Spiritual Song."

IN the time of the crusades many thousands of men gathered together from all Christian nations, in order to conquer the holy land, and to gain possession of the sepulchre of Christ. Always before a battle would take place, it was customary for them to sing the beautiful hymn "*Media vita.*"

This world-renowned hymn was composed nearly a thousand years ago by St. Notkerus, on the occasion of seeing workmen, surrounded by the greatest danger, engaged in building a bridge over a ravine.

The following are the words of the hymn :

"In the midst of life we are in death ; whom shall we seek as helper but Thee, O Lord, who art justly indignant at our sins.

"In Thee our fathers have hoped ; they have hoped, and Thou hast redeemed them, O holy Lord God !

"Upon Thee our fathers have called ; have called, and they have not been confounded—Holy, Powerful !

"Refuse not to aid us in our advanced years, when our strength has left us ; forsake us not, O holy and merciful Saviour, deliver us not up to a bitter death."

St. Notkerus was a monk in the convent of St. Gallen, Switzerland ; besides this beautiful hymn he composed thirty-eight others, equally fine, in which with his whole soul he sings to the Christian world like a heavenly nightingale.

We could speak of the holy life of St. Notkerus, of his rigid manner of living, of his great piety, and of the special light he received, so that he sometimes was enabled to foretell the future ; but we find the same also in other Saints. We will, however, speak of the gifts which in a special manner were given to him.

St. Notkerus, even in his youth, composed beautiful hymns for the Church, which were exhibited as models by his teachers to the other scholars. After the death of St. Notkerus, the Abbot of St. Gallen went to Rome, and Pope Innocent III. asked him how the anniversary of his death was celebrated in the convent. The Abbot replied that it was kept like that of any other deceased brother, whereupon the Pope reproached him, and said that a man whose hymns were so full of the Holy Ghost, should be venerated as a Saint, and it so happened that shortly afterwards Notkerus was really canonized.

The monk Ekkehard, who lived in the convent of St. Gallen, and who wrote the life of St. Notkerus, says, in regard to the beautiful hymns composed by the Saint : "God gave to Notkerus such angelic art, that the faithful, by listening to his pious hymns, were spiritually elevated, their hearts were opened, and the spirit of God descended upon them. Eliseus the prophet was once



asked to announce the word of God at a time when he felt that the spirit of prophecy was not in him. He then desired to have a minstrel brought to him, and as soon as the harpist touched the strings of his instrument, the spirit of prophecy returned to him."

Sweet music gladdens the heart, and awakens joy and happiness within us. In singing psalms and hymns, therefore, we prepare the way for the Lord to enter our hearts when we elevate them to Him in thanksgiving and praise.

The singing of psalms consoles our saddened hearts, soothes our minds, awakens the spirit, moves the sinner to tears, purifies the inner man, and makes him more willing to perform works of piety. Even if the hearts of sensual men are hardened, they become softened as soon as the sweet tones of music resound in the air. Although it is not always the melody, but the divine words which move Christians, it happens that the melody sometimes produces a better and more lasting effect in the heart than any words could do; for there are many who by the sweetness of music are brought to repent of their sins, and who are easier led to contrition, tears, and a desire for amendment, by listening to it, than by the mere reading of words.

St. Notkerus had not only the gift of composing the words of spiritual songs, but he would also compose the music for them. He wrote a hymn in honor of the Holy Ghost, which became quite celebrated, and which was added to the Mass of the Holy Ghost.

Some musicians are of a fickle, effeminate, and sensual character, but with St. Notkerus it was the very reverse. Through life he was very rigid and severe with himself; even in his youth he avoided idle walks, and left the convent only when he was told. Useless conversations he never wished to hear, far less to join in them, for deep in his heart were written the words of the holy Scripture: "In all thy works remember thy last end, and thou shalt never sin." (Eccles. 7 : 40.) There are some who love profane music, and others who love sacred music. We shall not warn you against immodest songs; for whoever has even a spark of Christianity left in him, will refrain from listening to them. There are many secular songs which contain nothing sinful. We must, however, be very moderate in our use of them. On the contrary it is very appropriate for a Christian to lift up his heart to God in singing religious songs. St. Paul even admonishes Christians in his epistles that they should speak to themselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual canticles, singing and making melody in their hearts to the Lord. (Eph. 5 : 19.) This practice should not only be observed in churches, but also in families. When, however, you sing sacred songs, guard against two things: first, that you do not become vain, and, secondly, not to sing without devotion, for *singing is a beautiful prayer*.

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## ST. URSULINE.

(April 7.)

"Knowledge of one's self."

It is said of this Saint that, when but a few months old, she could say the words: "O Lord, God the Father," and when very young her mind was constantly filled with thoughts of God. She kept herself so reserved from all worldly pleasures, that the neighbors said to her mother: "Your daughter must be very proud and distant, because she never visits us, as other persons of her age do." Ursuline, to whom the mother reported what she had heard, said: "Why should I give up the company of my Lord Jesus Christ, and of the Saints, on account of these persons? The Lord has called me, so that I must serve and follow Him."

Ursuline attained an extraordinary knowledge of the holy Scriptures and of the truths of religion, and refuted doubts and objections so clearly and convincingly that every one was astonished how so much wisdom could dwell in so young a girl; but she at the same time always preserved the greatest modesty. One day she was asked by a haughty man: "If you are as wise as they say you are, explain to me the doctrine of the most holy Trinity!" St. Ursuline answered: "If you were allowed to see the triune God Himself, would you be able to comprehend and explain in words His substance?" The man said: "Certainly not." "Well," answered the virgin, "your question then is quite useless."

Ursuline had to suffer many cruel suspicions and even persecutions on account of her great talents; she was once accused of being a witch, (a thing which often happened at that time—four hundred years after Christ,) because malicious persons had ascribed all the extraordinary things she had performed to the agency of the devil rather than to the power of God who, however, employed her in the then complicated affairs of the Church, to advise and warn persons of high standing.

Ursuline, driven away from Parma, where she lived, by the tyranny of the governor of that city, fled with her mother to Verona, and lived there quietly in labor and prayer. After some years had passed away, she became very ill, and her mother begged her to pray to God for her recovery, so that she might not be taken away from her; but St. Ursuline said: "Dear mother, we must submit to the will of God, for He knows our wants. Has not God so far taken good care of us in this miserable world? Is it not just that we sinners should suffer something with Jesus Christ, our supreme Head? We are His children. I know that my last hour has come, and that I shall soon return to the earth from whence I sprung. We must bow down to the will of God."

Her mother, knowing well how holy had been the life led by Ursuline, was

satisfied that her daughter was now about to enter heaven, but at the same time asked for herself and for others some spiritual advice from the dying Saint. Ursuline said: "Above all things I earnestly beseech you to love one another; hold fast to the true and living faith, and be convinced that whatever befalls you comes from God, and proceeds from his infinite love towards His creatures, and not out of hatred. I admonish you also, not to condemn any one, for appearances are deceitful, and suspicion is a most destructive poison to the soul."

The day before her death she prayed: "O eternal God, my Lord and my Master, who hast made out of dust the body of this Thy creature; O sweetest love, O ardent goodness, out of dust hast Thou made this frail abode, in which Thou didst place the great and infinite treasure of the soul. I, Thy poor servant, offer up to Thee my life; have mercy on me and pardon me my sins and omissions; have mercy on me, and give me Thy blessing." After this she struck her breast several times, saying: "It is my fault, eternal Trinity, that I have so often offended Thy majesty by disobedience, ingratitude, ignorance, and other faults. Wo is me that I have so carelessly obeyed Thy commands, especially the one which impressed upon me the obligation of honoring Thee, and of loving my neighbor. I have done the very reverse; I have sought my own honor, and in time of need I have done nothing for my neighbor. It is my fault, for Thou, my Father, hast commanded me to renounce myself, to seek only the praise and honor of Thy name, and the salvation of souls; but I have sought my own consolation! Most merciful Father, Thou hast continually invited me to embrace Thee with ardent love, with humble and persevering prayer for Thy holy Church, and for the salvation of the whole world; I have not responded to Thy invitations, but have been sleeping on the bed of slothfulness."

In such a manner did the purest dove, as her biographer called her, accuse herself; she then received the holy communion with profound humility and veneration; she lifted up her eyes to a crucifix, and commenced to pray devoutly, and spoke such sublime sentences, that those present could hardly comprehend her. After a while she called her mother, and said: "Give me, dearest mother, thy blessing, for the time has come for me to return to my Creator." The mother, weeping bitterly, and lamenting, said: "My daughter, I bless thee, but I beseech thee also to bless thy mother." Ursuline raised her hand a little, blessed her mother and those around her, and then said: "Lord, Thou callest me; see, I come to Thee!" And after having said in a subdued voice: "Father, into Thy hands do I recommend my soul and my spirit," she died. Her body was buried first at Verona, but afterwards taken to Parma, and buried in the convent church of St. Quintinus, and her memory is held in benediction even until the present day.

The more perfect man becomes, the less perfect does he think himself, the more does he forget his good works, and the clearer does he see that before God his soul is far from being stainless. It is as with a white robe; the whiter



and finer it is, the more easily can you discern the least stain upon it, and the more disagreeable to the eye is the effect of such stains; in a soiled and unclean dress, on the contrary, we do not even notice the single stains, but it strikes us more, when here and there places remain which have not been soiled, but are yet white. In the same manner the sinner does not consider how full of stains is his soul, but relies chiefly upon one or two good qualities which he possesses, or on some good action of his life, forgetting that it should have been his endeavor to serve God in every thing that he did. The avaricious man, for example, thinks that he has done a great work of charity, and is a good man, if he gives at one time a small sum of money to the poor, while the Christian gives according to his ability, and never thinks that he has given enough. So St. Ursuline, whose endeavor was to serve God with her whole heart, found many dark spots in her soul. Ask yourself, dear reader, to which class you belong; to those whose souls are so unclean that but a few white spots are to be seen, or to those whose souls are entirely pure and spotless?

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## ST. PERPETUUS.

(April 8.)

"Last will."

THE life of this Saint proposes to us almost the same matter of meditation as did the Saint of yesterday. We have given you the last words spoken by St. Ursuline; we will now place before you the last will of St. Perpetuus, which still exists, although the Saint died thirteen hundred years ago. A last will or testament is a very important document; in reading it we often know much more accurately the state of the soul which has passed into eternity, than by the words spoken before death.

Have you yet made your last will? If not, why have you not done so? It is often a sign of fickleness, of carelessness towards your relations, a want of order, and even of unchristian cowardice; because you do not wish to think seriously of dying. The manner in which we should make our last will and testament, we will learn from the example given us by the Saint we commemorate to-day.

Perpetuus was Bishop of Tours; he was the son of a noble and wealthy family, and was the owner of large estates; but he was at the same time a true follower of St. Martin, who had been formerly been Bishop of Tours, and was distinguished for his love and charity towards the poor. Although having a sister by the name of Fidia Julia, and other relatives, he looked upon the poor as his

children, who should one day inherit all that he possessed. The destitute, the beggar, the sick, the widow, the orphan were his favorites, his friends, his brothers, and his masters.

We will pass over what he as a Bishop did for the welfare of the Church, and place before you his last will, just as it was written by him.

"In the name of Jesus. Amen. Perpetuus, the sinner and priest of the Church of Tours. I desire not to leave the world without having made my testament, in order that nothing may be taken away from the poor, of what God has so kindly and liberally confided to me without my ever having merited it, and in order that the property of the priest may be given only to the Church. To the priests, deacons, and ecclesiastics of my church I give and leave the peace of the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen. Confirm, O God, what thou hast wrought in us; let not schisms be known among them, but preserve them firm in their faith. Whoever follows the precepts of the Gospel shall be blessed with all heavenly blessings through Jesus Christ. Amen. And may Jesus destroy the wicked by the breath of his mouth. Amen. Peace to the Church, peace to the people living in the city and the country, through God the Father of the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen. Come, O Lord, and be not slack. Amen. To you priests, deacons, and ecclesiastics of my church, I leave this body, to be buried wherever you may choose; I know that my Redeemer liveth, and in my flesh I shall see my God. Amen. If however you wish to show mercy to me, who am unworthy, I desire to rest at the feet of St. Martin until the day of judgment. You shall see, you shall judge, you shall choose; I will. I appoint, and confirm whatever you think best, my brethren.

"I give to my church the field and pond in Savonniere, and the pastures, meadows, and the mills on the river; the estate of Bertiniac, together with the woods and its profits I leave to my church, but in such a manner, that from the revenues oil shall be bought for the lamps which are always burning at the grave of St. Martin. If however this should be neglected, and my will not fulfilled in this respect, the whole estate shall fall to the heirs hereafter named in my will. All the debts owing to me by my debtors, I will remit on the day of my death, and I forbid any one to collect them.

"To thee, my dearly beloved and reverend brother Eufronius, I leave the silver box containing the relics of the Saints, and the Gospel written by Bishop Hilary. Remember me. Amen. To the church of St. Denis I leave my silver chalice and the silver cross containing the relics of St. Denis; for my sister Fidia Julia I leave my small golden cross, containing relics of the Lord; but I desire, that if she should die before Dadolene, that it shall be given to the latter; and I pray thee also, Sister Dadolene, to leave it after thy death to some church, that it may not pass into the hands of those who would not be worthy to possess it. Should Dadolene die before you, Sister Fidia Julia, I will that the above mentioned cross shall be given to a church. Remember me, dearly beloved. Amen.

“To thee, Count Agilo, I leave my horse and a mule, which you may select, on account of your excellent services to the Church and to my sons, the poor, in order that you may continue to take care of them.

“To thee, my dear brother in Christ, whom God shall appoint after my death as pastor over our church, I give all that you may need for the exercise of your episcopal functions; take what you choose of my effects, and the rest shall be given to my heirs. But my dear brother in Christ, love my priests, deacons, ecclesiastics, and virgins; assist them by your good example, meet them with kindness, look upon them as your children and not as servants, and let them consider you as their father and not as their tyrant. This I will, pray, and command.

“And you, my most blessed brethren, my crown, my joy, my sons, ye poor of Christ, ye destitute, ye beggars, ye sick, ye widows, and orphans! I hereby appoint you my heirs. After paying the above mentioned legacies, I make you heirs of all my estates, lands, pastures, meadows, woods, vineyards, houses, gardens, water-privileges, mills, gold, silver, clothes, and every thing not especially mentioned in my will. And that order may be preserved, I will, that immediately after my death the whole bequest shall be sold and divided into three parts: two portions shall be given to the poor according to the judgment of Reverend Father Agarius and Count Agilo; the third part shall be distributed among the widows and poor women, according to the judgment of Sister Dadolene, and this I will, pray, and appoint her to do in my name. Praise to the Lord Jesus Christ, in whose name I, Perpetuus, make this my last will. Amen.

From this testament of St. Perpetuus we should learn to be charitable to the poor, and if we have no children of our own, we should remember the blessed poor of Christ. The Saviour has said expressly, that whatsoever we do to them, we do to Him.

After providing for the members of Christ we should give to the Church. The poorer a church is, the more should the Christian give to it out of his abundance, so that the decency of divine worship may be observed. It is a very sad sight to see the churches in greater poverty, than the houses of the rich parishioners.

Perpetuus left to his sister but a small token of remembrance, although he loved her, because she possessed a sufficient support from the property of the parents. The Gospel expressly commands us to take care of our relatives, but if they are well provided for, we should rather give to the poor and destitute, than add to the wealth of our rich relatives.

It is not displeasing to God to leave something to our friends and to persons for whom we cherish a particular regard, not to enrich them, but to show to them our love, respect, and gratitude, as did St. Perpetuus.

The same principles which you should observe in making your last will, ac-



ording to the example of St. Perpetuus, should be applied to your whole life, for life itself is the great testament, which is indelibly written in the book of eternity.

## BLESSED CRESCENTIA.

(April 9.)

"True Distinction."

WORLDLY-MINDED persons frequently express their astonishment—which is not always unmingled with envy—at the reputation and great fame sometimes attained by people of low birth. One, for instance, obtains high rank and fame by having shown great bravery in time of war; another distinguishes himself in science and art; and we know that a fine voice, or splendid acting on the stage, has often obtained a wide-spread fame, for not only men but even women. The true Christian, however, desires not much honor and fame, but follows rather in the footsteps of the blessed Crescentia, a way leading also to great honor, and one open to every Christian.

Her father was but a poor weaver in the village of Kaufbeurn, and yet without striving for it, she has gained an exceedingly high reputation for sanctity, and her name is highly honored throughout Germany, especially in Swabia, so that many Christians from far and near make pilgrimages to her grave. She obtained her reputation and honor by means of a pious life, consequently by means within the reach of every one; but although every Christian may not obtain great honor and distinction in this life, his name will, nevertheless, be honored in heaven, and before the whole world at the Last Judgment.

Crescentia manifested even in her early youth a pious disposition. She was often seen on her knees in prayer, in the house of her truly Christian parents, and she would frequently deny herself food in order, as she said, that she might share the sufferings of Christ.

In the village of Kaufbeurn was a convent of nuns, but as their revenues were very small, only wealthy persons could enter. Crescentia went often to the convent, and each time she prayed before the crucifix hanging on the wall. Once it seemed to her as if she heard the words coming from the crucifix: "Here thy dwelling will be!" but as her parents were very poor, she had not up to her twentieth year the least prospect of seeing fulfilled the ardent desire of her heart—that of entering the convent.

But although the earthly father of Crescentia was very poor, she had a powerful father in heaven, and He had determined that His pious daughter should be received in His house. By the side of the convent stood a tavern

which was frequented day and night by idle and noisy persons, who continually disturbed the devotion of the nuns, and the quiet of the convent. The only way to stop this was to buy the tavern; but the convent was too poor to raise the necessary money. Matthew Werle, a Protestant and the mayor of Kaufbeurn, succeeded, however, by his influence in having the tavern sold to the convent for a very small sum, and to this noble action he added still another. When the nuns thanked him, and remarked that the sisters would never forget the benefit he had conferred upon them, he begged them to show him also a favor, which was to receive Crescentia in the convent; "for," added he, "it would be a pity if such an angel were exposed to the temptations and trials of the world."

Through the intercession of the good mayor, Crescentia was received into the convent; but her treatment there, on account of her poverty, was very humiliating. Her heart, however, did not become embittered by what she had to undergo, but she continually prayed for those who had offended and abused her.

Crescentia at first had her own cell, but she soon after had to leave it for the accommodation of a wealthy novice who had entered the convent; and from that time she was obliged to ask permission to spend the night on the floor of the cell of one of the nuns, until finally a dark, damp corner in the convent was assigned to her as a sleeping-place. She had to perform the most menial services, and endure great injustice. When she had been an inmate of the convent for a year, and the evil treatment she received had not been able to turn her from her purpose, she was made door-keeper, and at a later period, cook of the convent. Gradually, however, the nuns felt the influence and power of her pious life, and deeply regretting the many wrongs and the ill-treatment they had inflicted on her, she was chosen unanimously to be the Abbess, a distinction which Crescentia accepted only by command of her superiors, whom she was obliged to obey.

Blessed Crescentia was too deeply penetrated by the love of God, that she wept bitterly when she heard indifferent Christians remark: "It is sufficient not to sin, and not necessary to accomplish good." She implored God rather to visit her with all diseases of the body, with affliction and pain, than to let her fall into sin. She regretted every day that passed on which she had not been able to benefit a fellow-being, and thanked God with a joyful heart for every opportunity she had of doing or accomplishing some good. She never permitted those under her care to indulge in uncharitable or slanderous remarks, and if unable to prevent it, she warmly defended the person slandered, especially if they were absent. Her great benevolence and charity to the poor, her severity towards herself in the service of her Lord, allowing herself but three hours sleep upon a hard couch, her ardent piety and rigid fasting, her great humility and meekness, especially as Abbess, her clemency towards those whom she was obliged to reproach and punish, and whose pardon she always asked before she

punished, clearly prove that the spirit of Christ had taken possession of her heart, that she was a worthy bride of Him whose sufferings had so deeply impressed her mind, that she experienced every Friday from nine until three o'clock, in her own body, the torments and pains endured by her Saviour on the cross; and she would often faint when the hour of His crucifixion arrived.

Blessed Crescentia died in the year one thousand seven hundred and forty-four, and was canonized by Pope Pius VII., in the year one thousand eight hundred and one.

The condition of her soul, and the whole essence of her pious life, is expressed in the following morning prayer, written by her: "My dearest Jesus, I desire during this day to think, speak, and work as Thou didst, in obedience to Thy heavenly Father; and I desire to love, praise, and honor Thee, and to thank Thee for Thy most holy and bitter sufferings and death. I desire also to fulfill always Thy divine will in thought, word, and deed; if it is Thy wish that I shall be wronged by my fellow-creatures, I will accept it in union with the love and humility with which Thou didst accept the rage of Thy persecutors. In Thy grace I will show myself meek and charitable towards my enemies, and imitate the meekness, humility, and patience Thou hast taught me by Thy example. O, my dearest Jesus! Make me worthy of being Thy servant, and of serving Thee according to Thy divine will."

By leading such a life, St. Crescentia found not only honor in the eyes of God, a distinction for which she really did strive; but she found honor also in the eyes of the world, a distinction which she had never labored to attain.

## ST. MECHTILDIS.

(April 10.)

"The Ecclesiastical Year."

THE Countess Mechtildis was born in Saxony, and was a sister of St. Gertrude. Both sisters took the veil, and Mechtildis was chosen Abbess of the Convent of Diessen, in Bavaria, where she died in the year thirteen hundred. Her life, spent in the fear of the Lord, had been so pure, that the priest to whom she confessed told her, to sing the "Te Deum laudamus," that is, "We praise Thee, O God."

She despised earthly pomp, although great riches were at her disposal. No impure thought was ever harbored in her heart. Like all other Saints, she lived in great self-denial, and her charity towards the poor and sick was so great, that when in her old age she was too feeble to walk, she had herself carried to



the dwellings of the afflicted. The Passion of Christ, on which she frequently meditated, had so deeply impressed her mind, that she could not speak of it without shedding tears. She was never seen idle; she either worked, prayed, read, or instructed others. When she became sick, she showed so much patience, composure, serenity, and kindness, that those who came to see her were cheered and comforted.

From the book still in our possession, containing the revelations and spiritual visions with which Mechtildis was favored, we will, for the edification and instruction of our readers, select those which have special reference to the festivals of the year, and this is also the reason why we preferred to speak of St. Mechtildis in preference to the other Saints whose memory the Church commemorates on this day.

In *Advent* St. Mechtildis wished to be taught how to salute the mother of the Lord. And the Lord instructed her as follows: "Thou shalt salute the virgin heart of my mother, because it was the purest, and because she was the first who ever made the vow of chastity;—because it was the *most humble*, by reason of which virtue the Holy Ghost was attracted; it was the *most patient*, because she knew of the sufferings I should have to undergo; it was the *most faithful*, because it was her desire that her only Son should be sacrificed for the salvation of the world, and because it was *entirely filled with the love of God and man*."

At *Christmas* she was miraculously enlightened as to how the Son of God is truly the light of the world. She understood how in so small a child the perfection of the whole Divinity could dwell, and how almighty power and unfathomable wisdom were concealed in Him, for He was as full of wisdom when lying in the cradle as he is now, ruling in heaven. In the transport of her mind, she took the child, embraced and pressed it so closely to her heart, that she heard and felt the beating of His heart.

On *New Year*, the festival of the Circumcision of the Lord, Mechtildis prayed He might give her and the convent-sisters the blessing of the new year, and remove from them all that displeased Him. And the Lord said: "You must remove from your hearts all thoughts of pride, impatience, and worldly vanity. You must remove from your mouths all words of flattery, slander, and malicious judgment. From your deeds you must remove all idleness, want of zeal in doing good, violation of the commandments of God and of disobedience to His Holy will."

On *The Feast of Epiphany*, after Mechtildis had received holy communion, the Lord addressed her in the following words: "Behold, I give thee *gold*, that is my divine love, and *incense*, that is all my holiness and devotion, and *myrrh*, that is the bitterness of my sufferings. All this I give thee, that thou mayest return it to me as thine own. To the soul that doeth as I command, I will give it back twofold, yea, an hundred-fold, and hereafter life everlasting."

On *Candlemas-day* Mechtildis saw the glorious Mother with the royal child Jesus on her arm, clad in a blue garment, full of golden flowers, and on whose breast, neck, and arms was written the sweet name of Jesus. Mechtildis asked: "O most sweet virgin, dost thou adorn thy Son, when about to present Him in the temple? And Mary replied: "No, but I have prepared Him carefully, and I offer Him up with such gratitude, that if the devotion of all the Saints could be united in one person, it could not equal that with which I have presented my child to His heavenly Father; but all my joy has been changed into sadness by the words of Simeon."

In *Holy Week*, when Mechtildis was engaged in meditating upon every single suffering of the Saviour, she asked how man could ever repay the Lord for what he had undergone. And the Lord said: "In return for my imprisonment, let him willingly and voluntarily, for my sake, fetter himself with the chain of true obedience;—in return for the blows upon my face, let him honor his superiors;—in return for the pains inflicted by the crown of thorns, let him resist temptation with all his strength;—in return for the purple garment, put upon me in mockery, let him avoid all luxury;—in return for my scourging, let him adhere to me with perfect fidelity and patience, under good or bad circumstances;—in return for the nailing of my feet to the cross, let him strive to suppress all impure desires;—in return for the fastening of my hands to the cross, let him employ himself in all good works, and for my sake avoid all that is evil;—in return for the wound in my heart, from which blood and water issued forth, let him obey my commands, and regard them higher than he does any thing upon earth."

On *Easter*, St. Mechtildis saw a heavenly mansion, before the entrance of which stood two angels, with their wings extended, so that they touched one another, and thus produced a sound like the sweet tones of a harp. In spirit St. Mechtildis entered the hall, knelt down at the feet of the Lord, adored and kissed his wounds, and having reached the wound of the heart, she saw it open and a flame came out like that of a burning torch. The Lord received her kindly, and said: "Enter into my divine heart, and all that you find there shall be yours;" and breathing upon her, He said: "Receive the Holy Ghost!"

On *Ascension-day* the Lord said: "I have become the advocate of man and the mediator before my Father. As a faithful steward carefully collects and marks down the revenues of his master and repairs all losses from his own means, so do I with regard to man. I repay an hundred-fold to my Father all that is wanting on the part of man, so that he may be enabled to surrender his soul, enriched with inestimable graces, into the hands of my heavenly Father, and in the presence of all the Saints."

On *Pentecost* the Lord said to Mechtildis: "The Holy Ghost effected three changes in the Apostles: 1. He animated them with divine love and entirely changed them, so that they who had formerly been timid, weak and selfish, now

became so strong and firm, that they were not afraid of dying, and regarded it as an honor and joy to suffer out of love to God. 2. As the fire purifies the iron and makes it valuable, so also the Holy Ghost purified the Apostles from all unclean desires and sanctified them. 3. As gold, if melted, may be formed into any shape, so the Holy Ghost melted the hearts of the Apostles in His fire; and formed them anew after His divine likeness, so that in them appeared fulfilled the words of David: "I have said, you are gods." (Ps. 81 : 6.)

To obtain such a change, the Christian must implore the Holy Ghost.

On *Trinity Sunday* the Christian should recommend his faith to the Holy Trinity: *to the omnipotence of the Father*, so that by His divine power it may become firm: *to the unfathomable wisdom of the Son*, that He may enlighten it with the splendor of His divine knowledge: *to the love of the Holy Ghost*, that He may move it to love, and thus make it effective.

On the *festivals of the Blessed Virgin Mary*, St. Meehtildis had many visions, only one of which however we shall mention. She at one time accused herself of not honoring sufficiently the Blessed Virgin. Then the Lord said to her: "For this neglect praise my mother in her fidelity. She was most faithful to me, and in all her actions preferred my will to hers. Praise her fidelity, for she assisted me faithfully in all my necessities, and all that I suffered in my body, she endured in her heart. Thou shalt praise her fidelity, since she is still the most faithful to me in heaven, in endeavoring to search out sinners in order to convert them."

On the *eve of All-Saints*, St. Meehtildis saw in an ecstasy a living well, out shining the sun in brightness, the water of which was perfectly sweet, and from which arose a fragrant perfume. Its bottom was solid and of costly workmanship; it was provided with buckets that became filled without human assistance, and which offered their sweet contents to all who desired to drink of them. By the *bottom of the well* was indicated the *Omnipotence of the Father*; by the *bucket*, the *wisdom of the Son* extending over and reaching to all creation; by the *sweetness of the water*, the *unspeakable sweetness of the Holy Ghost*; by the *invigorating air*, the *fact that God is the life of all things*; for as it is impossible for man to live without air, so is it impossible for man to exist without God. Around the bottom of the well stood seven columns with capitals of sapphire, through which seven rivulets flowed: one to the Angels, one to the Prophets, one to the Apostles, one to the Martyrs, one to the Confessors, one to the Virgins, and one to the other Saints, so that they were satiated therefrom with the fullness of all delights, and emitted a most delicious odor, as they inhaled a rare perfume from each other with holy longing. It was thereby indicated that the Saints in kindness and in love communicate to each other the joys and treasures they possess in God.



## ST. LEO THE GREAT.

(April 11.)

"Personal Dignity."

FOUR hundred years after Christ, a wild, savage, and previously unknown people issued forth from Hungary into Germany; they were a race of hideous men, of frightful appearance; having small eyes, countenances intentionally disfigured, dark complexion, and broad, powerful shoulders. Wherever they came, they slew the inhabitants, pillaged and devastated the country, and in their hatred against Christianity, devoted themselves especially to the slaughter of priests, and to the destruction of churches. These uncivilized and cruel people were the Huns, and their king was called Attila, or "The Scourge of God." After having ravaged many countries, and terrified many nations, Attila with his hordes invaded Italy. Resistance was in vain; Milan was already conquered, and Rome seemed now to be the aim of Attila. In this calamity Pope Leo, the supreme head of the Christian Church, resolved to meet Attila, the head of the most bitter enemies of Christianity, in order to arrest him in his march towards Rome, not by force of arms, but by the gentle power of his words. He went himself for that purpose to the camp of the Huns near Mantua, where he was well received by Attila, and succeeded in persuading him to lead his army, instead of into Rome, back over the Alps and the Danube. Thus the mere words of the holy Pope accomplished what the best armies of the time were unable to do, the preservation of Italy from the ferocious Huns, from immense slaughter, and from terrible devastation. In memory of this wonderful deliverance a festival of thanksgiving was celebrated every year in the city of Rome, and among the sermons of St. Leo, which we still possess, there is one preached upon one of these anniversaries, in which he reproaches the Romans for having so soon forgotten what God had done for them, a forgetfulness which made itself clearly evident by the small number of those present at the divine services of the day.

As if God intended to punish this want of gratitude, Rome was a few years later visited by a calamity similar to that which had threatened its inhabitants under Attila. In the year four hundred and fifty-five after Christ, the Vandals, a people not less ferocious and cruel, invaded Italy under their King Genserich. They were not heathens, but adherents to the heresy of Arius, who denied that Christ was equal in His divinity to the Father. The Vandals under Genserich were greater enemies of the Catholic Christians than even the heathens had been, and we may imagine how they treated the faithful when we are assured that, instigated by a false suspicion, Genserich ordered the ears and nose of his own daughter-in-law to be cut off. Many Catholics were burned alive, others had their tongues torn out, and all who fell into the hands of the barbarians

were most cruelly tortured. Wherever they came, they destroyed the churches, profaned the relics, drove away the Bishops, and vented their rage by laying waste every place that they visited; and such was their ferocity, that the epithet "*Vandalic*" is used even at the present day to express an inhuman or cruel act.

Genserich had marched with his Vandals upon Rome, and although it seemed to be an almost hopeless undertaking, St. Leo, full of the spirit of God, visited the camp of the Vandal king, and implored him to spare the city. His request was not attended to, for the city was given up to pillage for the space of two weeks; but he obtained a promise that the inhabitants should not be put to death, and that the city should not become a prey to the torch of the incendiary.

What was it that gave such power to the words of St. Leo? Certainly not his pontifical office; for according to all human probability, instead of commanding respect and influence, and affording him protection, it must, with such bitter enemies of the Church as were Attila and Genserich, have even still more endangered his life. The wonderful result of his words was caused by the respect which his dignified and holy bearing commanded even from the barbarous princes of uncivilized nations.

St. Leo was one of the most efficient Popes that ever filled the chair of St. Peter; he was endowed with great talents, a very learned man, and was zealously devoted to the welfare of the Church. Against the dangerous heresies that had spread among many dioceses and nations, he contended with the greatest firmness for the true Catholic doctrine, and many of his excellent regulations and dispositions in the Church are still observed. Although burdened with so many important duties and affairs of both Church and State, he preached frequently to his people, and we have still in our possession ninety-six of his sermons.

The time has long passed since St. Leo lived; the country is far distant from us in which he labored for the glory of God; the holy office which he filled, the highest that the Catholic Church can bestow upon man, is far above our condition in life; but nevertheless what we have related here of St. Leo, contains a very important lesson for us.

Every one in their riper years—parents, brothers, and sisters, priests, magistrates, teachers, and masters—may by means of entreaty, request, admonition, or command, influence others to do right, and they often have it in their power to prevent them from doing wrong. We will not speak here of those who are too negligent or too indifferent to interest themselves in the Christian welfare of their fellow-beings; but why is it that so many earnest and affectionate admonitions frequently result in nothing? Can it be that they fall upon deaf ears, as priests and parents so often complain? We will tell you why. One of the principal reasons for it is because the admonisher does not possess what gave

so much weight to the words of St. Leo, even before the barbarous kings Attila and Genserich, that is, a dignified mind and character. If we wish that our words, exhortations, and requests shall be attended to, it is above all things necessary that we possess the respect of those whom we wish to reform; and this respect can only be gained by our leading a truly Christian life. The Gospel says: "The prayer of the just availeth much," not only with God, but also with man, even wicked men, because even the wicked can not do otherwise than esteem the virtuous, and because the blessing of God is with the word of the virtuous, and gives to it weight and power.

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## ST. SABAS.

(April 12.)

"Branches of the Tree of Christ."

THE grain of seed planted in the garden of Joseph of Arimathea, grew up to be a large tree, spreading its branches over the whole earth, and is still growing in stature and in strength. As the moisture and nourishment that a tree draws from the earth by means of its roots causes new leaves and branches to appear, so Christ is always drawing Christians to Himself, and infuses into their worldly-minded and sinful souls His own spirit, so that His spirit lives in them, and they become branches, as it were, of Himself. This is proved by reading the life of any Saint; for every Saint acts as he thinks would be most pleasing to Jesus Christ.

We still possess a letter written by the community of Gothland to the church of Cappadocia, in which the following is related: "What is said of St. Peter, 'In every people he who fears God, and loves righteousness, is agreeable to Him,' is now shown, and is verified in the life of St. Sabas, who was one of the martyrs of God and of our Lord Jesus Christ. He was a Goth, and lived among a wicked and perverted race, but he nevertheless imitated the Saints, and with them honored Christ by practicing every kind of virtue in such a manner, that he shone in the world like a star. When yet a child he embraced the religion of our Lord Jesus Christ, and he regarded it as his most important duty to become a perfect man, from the knowledge he possessed of Christ.

"He was perfect in faith, obedient in all righteousness, gentle, pious, inexperienced in speech, but not in knowledge, and peaceful with all. He defended the truth, rebuked the worshipers of idols, was not proud, but meek, not passionate, but calm and collected. He was always ready to accomplish a good



work, was full of care for the Church, despised all earthly goods, and led a life of chastity and great mortification. His heart knew nothing of ambition. He satisfied all the demands of virtue and duty, never wavered in his faith, which manifested itself in love, and always frankly exhorted the wrong-doer to lead a virtuous life. Before he suffered martyrdom he had shown himself to be a most zealous advocate of true piety.

"When the magistrates of Gothland began to persecute the Christians, and especially when they were commanded to eat of the meat sacrificed to idols, some of the heathens endeavored to save their Christian relatives and friends by offering them meat that had not been sacrificed. St. Sabas being informed of it, not only refused to touch such food, but also publicly declared that he who ate of such meat, in order to save his life, desired to show that he was no Christian, and, therefore, in reality ceased to be one. Thus he prevented many Christians from falling into the snares of Satan. Others of the heathens wished to swear before the judges, in order to save their friends, that there were no Christians in the whole place; when, inspired with divine courage, Sabas stepped forth and said: 'No one shall swear for me, for I am a Christian.' The heathens then swore that, with the exception of Sabas, there was not another Christian in the city; and the judge being told that he was very poor, said: 'Such a one can do neither good nor harm,' and he gave orders to turn him out.

"At a later period, however, St. Sabas was forced from his bed by a troop of heathens who came in the night to Gothland, dragged him over a field of thorns, cruelly beat him, and with his hands tied together he was hung upon a cross-beam. They then brought him meat, and told him to eat, if he wanted to save his life. Sabas asked them: 'Who sent me the meat?' And when they replied: 'Our Lord Atharid,' Sabas said: 'There is one Lord, who is God in heaven; this meat is unclean and unholy like Atharid himself, who has sent it.'

"Enraged at these words, a servant flung his pestle upon the chest of the martyr, so that those who witnessed the act thought that the blow would be mortal; but St. Sabas in his pious ardor did not seem to feel the horrible pain, and did not even utter a sigh.

"Atharid then told his satellites to drown St. Sabas, and while he was being dragged to the river for that purpose, he gave praise to God with a loud voice, that he was found worthy to die for his faith in Christ. The executioners felt pity for the innocent man, and were willing to let him escape; but when St. Sabas urged them to obey the command of Atharid, they pushed him into the water, and by means of a wooden beam, to which the head of the sufferer had been fastened, held him under the water until he was dead. Thus St. Sabas died, on the twelfth day of April, in the year of our Lord three hundred and seventy-two, and in the thirty-eighth year of his age. His body was taken out of the water and left on the bank, and the Christians buried it; but at a later period it was disinterred, and sent to Cappadocia for veneration."

Thus Sabas lived, suffered, and died a true spiritual branch of Christ. Search thy heart and life, dear reader, and see if the same spirit animates thee in thy actions, or a spirit contrary to that of Christ, and remember the words of St. Paul: "If any man have not the spirit of Christ, he is none of his." (Rom. 8 : 9.)

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### BLESSED IDA.

(April 13.)

"The Christian Mother."

ON the fifteenth day of July, in the year of our Lord one thousand and ninety-nine, after enormous difficulties and a most terrible struggle, the Crusaders took Jerusalem by storm, and resolved to elect a king. In order to be worthy to rule over the holy city and the conquered country, it was declared necessary that he should possess not only the excellent qualities of a good ruler and general, but also be distinguished by all the Christian virtues. The servants of the different princes in the army were, therefore, examined under oath, in regard to the morals and life of their masters, and when those of the Duke of Lorraine were interrogated, they declared that he had but one fault, which was that he remained too long in church after divine service was over. History also tells us in regard to him that he was valiant, chaste, frugal, mild, free from self-interest, and kind and benevolent to every one. Godfrey de Bouillon, Duke of Lorraine, on account of his virtues was, therefore, unanimously chosen king of Jerusalem. Godfrey accepted the government, but in his Christian humility he refused to be crowned with a golden crown in the place where our Saviour had been crowned with thorns. Even Arabic princes, Mohammedans, said of him: "Truly, this man is born to conquer the world, and to rule over all nations," and his renown was echoed throughout all Christian countries.

The mother of this celebrated and distinguished Christian hero was Blessed Ida, whose memory the Church this day commemorates; and as experience has often taught us that the most distinguished men of Christianity owe their virtues in a great measure to their mothers, so was it in this case. The good inclinations of mothers are more or less inherited by their children. A pious mother knows no more important duty than to educate her children in a Christian manner; and the incessant prayer of a pious mother to God, both here and hereafter, for the sake of her children, must be effective, and procure many

graces for them. If, therefore, a mother desires to lead her children to true happiness, that is, to virtue and eternal life, she must endeavor above all things to become with her whole heart a good Christian, as did the blessed Ida.

Ida was the wife of Count Eustachius of Boulogne, who honored and loved her on account of her great virtues. She was a true mother to the poor and sick, a kind friend of the widow and orphan, and a liberal benefactress to churches and convents, in which great charity the count, her husband, encouraged her. Her heart was free from haughtiness and full of humility, and her ardent desire and aim was to bring up her children—three sons and one daughter—in the fear of the Lord. Speaking on this point, her biographer says: “Blessed Ida brought up her three sons—Godfrey, Baldwin, and Eustatius—in virtue and in the fear of God; she had them instructed in all that their elevated position in life required, and endeavored to preserve them from all vicious habits.”

Every mother very naturally strives to impress the hearts of her children with what is most dear to her; the worldly-minded mother tries to procure for them all the pleasures of the world; the vain mother makes them the idols of her vanity, but the Christian mother will, like blessed Ida, bring up her children in virtue and piety.

Ida once had a vision indicating to her the reward she was to receive for the Christian education of her children. It appeared to her as if the sun descended, and rested for a moment in her lap; and in fact two of her sons were chosen kings, her daughter became the wife of an emperor, and the fame of her son Godfrey shines in history and in the Christian world with the brilliancy of the sun.

After the death of her husband, and when her children no longer needed her motherly supervision, she devoted herself entirely to works of piety and charity. How acceptable her offerings were in the sight of God, is abundantly proved by several miracles which happened through her intercession, but one of which we will mention, as it proves the kindness of her heart. She once perceived, during divine service in the church, a poor woman with her deaf and dumb little daughter, who was so poorly clad that she trembled from the cold. The pious countess beckoned the little girl to come near, and wrapped her cloak around her in order to keep the child warm. Suddenly the child recovered her hearing and speech, and exclaimed loudly: “Mother, mother!” Amazement reigned throughout the church, and in their joy at the miracle which had occurred in their midst, they burst forth into a song of praise, the “Te Deum laudamus.”

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## ST. LIDWINA.

(April 14.)

"Joy in the Cross."

ABOUT five hundred years ago there lived in Schiedam, Holland, a nobleman, who had become so poor that he accepted the appointment of watchman, in order to support himself. He already had four sons, when on Palm-Sunday, while the Passion was being read in the church, his wife gave birth to a daughter, who received in baptism the name of Lidwina. On account of her beauty, Lidwina had many suitors when very young, but she always prayed that God might preserve her from sensual love.

Once, while skating with several of her companions, she was thrown on the ice and received a severe injury in her side. She never recovered her strength, and from that moment was always sick and suffering. But a short time ago Lidwina, so beautiful, and endowed with so much bodily strength, must now be carried from place to place. Weakness soon put an end even to this, so that for thirty years she was confined to her bed: she ate so little during this time, that it would appear almost past belief, if we were not assured of the fact by her own confessor; and during seven years she did not sleep twenty-four hours. She had to lie continually upon her back, and could only move her head and her left arm, for the right was withered and hung to her body only by means of a few sinews and nerves. The magistrates of Schiedam testified under their signatures and seal, how great and unheard-of were the sufferings of this virgin.

After the death of her mother, Lidwina distributed her inheritance among the poor, although she was thereby reduced to extreme indigence. Her only bed was now a bundle of straw, and she was so little protected from the severity of the winter, that the tears would sometimes freeze upon her cheeks. Added to this bodily affliction St. Lidwina had also to endure others. Several courtiers once came to see her, because they had heard strange stories concerning her. In their wantonness and cruelty they disturbed and greatly afflicted her; they tore the curtain from her miserable couch, lighted a candle and held it before her face, called her a deceiver and a wretch, accused her of having given birth to several children, and of secretly eating and drinking in the night time.

Having suffered uninterruptedly from her fifteenth year until the last moment of her life, St. Lidwina finally yielded up her spirit, her sufferings during the last year of her life having been increased by an attack of calculus. Notwithstanding all she endured she felt more happy than many of those who enjoy perfect health and every earthly comfort. She hearkened to the call of the Saviour, who has said: "Come to me, all you that labor, and are burdened, and I will refresh you." (Matt. 11 : 28.)

In the first days of her sickness she very naturally wished to recover, and sometimes lost all patience, wept bitterly, and refused all spiritual aid and consolation, especially when she saw her former companions in perfect health and enjoying every earthly pleasure. Her confessor advised her to meditate upon the Passion of Christ, hoping that it would afford her comfort; she derived however very little consolation from doing so, and soon gave it up. He then admonished her to endeavor to overcome her distaste, and Lidwina gradually found so much comfort in meditating upon the Passion of Christ, that she remarked: "If by means of a single 'Ave Maria,' I could regain my bodily strength, I would not wish it."

She accustomed herself to contemplate by day and night the sufferings of Christ, in seven stations. Her heart thus became filled with such sweet joy that she frequently forgot her pain, and it appeared to her as if Christ were suffering for her. Her love for Jesus Christ had grown to be so strong, that, repenting her former indifference, she now wept for days each time she went to Holy Communion, as she formerly had wept from pain and impatience. Thus she held her Lord and Saviour embraced as it were with two arms: with the contemplation of His Passion and with the Holy Communion; so that she might have said with the bride in Solomon's Song: "A bundle of myrrh is my beloved to me, he shall abide between my breasts." (Cant. 1: 12.)

The soul of St. Lidwina, consecrated and sanctified by long sufferings and by continual spiritual intercourse with the Saviour during her seclusion from the world, became by degrees so pure and heavenly, that she was thought worthy to receive divine revelations. In the last year of her life she saw from time to time a rose-bush, that gradually grew up into a rose-tree, and her guardian-angel revealed to her that she would not die until all the rose-buds had opened and developed themselves into full blown roses. Lidwina had spoken of this to her confessor, and he asked her sometimes, if all the buds had yet opened, and at last, three months before her death, she declared that the rose-bush had come to its full growth, that it was now in full bloom, and that she hoped therefore soon to die. The night before Easter she fell again into an ecstasy, and having come to herself, the room was filled with a deliciously sweet odor, and she said that she heard in heaven the song of Allelujah, in which she would soon join herself; and in fact three days later her soul ascended into the abode of bliss. Her death occurred in the year of our Lord one thousand one hundred and thirty-three.

Every Christian afflicted with sickness, want, or persecution, may be greatly comforted by looking upon St. Lidwina, whose earthly sufferings of every description were almost beyond belief. She shows us also how, besides comfort, even great gains and rich treasures may be found in affliction, by frequently meditating upon the Passion of Christ, and by often and worthily receiving the Holy Communion. Such a mysterious power is contained therein, that all bit-

terness is changed into sweetness, and all suffering is borne in patience and in a spirit of love.

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## ST. PETER GONZALES.

(April 15.)

"God's Generosity."

PETER GONZALES, the son of noble and wealthy parents, was born in the city of Asturia, in Spain, where his uncle was Bishop, through whose care he received an excellent education, and when he had reached the proper age he was made a Canon. Being thus possessed of great authority and large revenues, the youthful Peter aspired to a higher position, which was nothing less than the office of a Dean, an office that would make him only second to his uncle, and he at length succeeded in obtaining it.

Young, handsome, rich, talented, of great learning, of noble birth, and in possession of one of the highest clerical offices, Gonzales was greatly elated with his honor and success. When on Christmas he received the appointment of Dean of the cathedral, his satisfaction not only found vent in words of boasting, but in a feeling of vain ostentation he mounted a beautiful horse to parade himself through the streets of the city. Passing a public square where many people were assembled, he wished to exhibit his superior horsemanship, and therefore put spurs to his horse; but it reared, and threw its gorgeously-attired rider in the dust. The people burst out into laughing, yelling, and mockery, while the object of their derision lay helpless in the dust and dirt. But God turned his disgrace and discomfiture to his benefit, and while within hearing of the people, he said: "If the world ridicules me thus at the moment when I intended to pay it homage, then I will forsake it, and employ the remainder of my life in the service of God." And he kept his promise.

From this time St. Peter withdrew entirely from the world, its pleasures, and empty honors, and devoted himself in sincere earnestness to God. He entered the order of Dominicans, made the vow of poverty and obedience, and manifested even in the first year of his novitiate such ardent zeal in the pursuit of true piety and all Christian virtues, that his example was a source of real edification to all. He endeavored especially to imitate St. Dominic, the founder of the order, in his deep humility, rigid mortification, contempt of all worldliness, and care for the salvation of his fellow-creatures. To proclaim the word of God being now his calling, he devoted himself with great industry to the study of



theology, fervently praying that God might endow him with the necessary talents.

When appointed preacher and confessor, he followed faithfully in the footsteps of the Good Shepherd, and with indefatigable zeal used every opportunity to lead back to God the strayed and erring. He left the most important business, and would even undertake journeys, when he thought that he could induce a fellow-being to make a perfect confession; and in every house he visited, he always exhorted the family most urgently to confess their sins, pointing out to them the dangerous condition of the sinner, eternal damnation, and the everlasting happiness of those who serve God faithfully.

The piety of St. Peter became so celebrated in Spain that King Ferdinand III. wished to be accompanied by him in his war against the Moors, hoping that the presence and prayers of the Saint would aid him in obtaining victory over the heathen. And in fact Peter accomplished a great deal of good in the army by his prayer, his counsels to the king, and by the sermons which he preached before the soldiers.

When King Ferdinand conquered the city of Cordova, St. Peter endeavored to restrain the rage and ferocity of the soldiers, and he succeeded in protecting the women, and saving the lives of several thousand persons. After he had dedicated many mosques, former places of Moorish worship, to the service of the true God, he followed the desire of his heart, that of preaching the Gospel of Christ to the poor. He visited especially the places where the people were still ignorant and uncivilized, and by his great eloquence, devoted charity, good example, and fervent piety, and sometimes by miracles that took place in answer to his prayers, he found that his labors were not without their reward.

St. Peter Gonzales closed his eventful and holy life in the year twelve hundred and forty-six. Because of the special pains he had taken to proclaim the word of God to the sailors on board of their ships, he is until this day venerated by them in Spain, and called upon for protection in time of danger at sea.

You have seen, O Christian, how the ambitious, vain, and haughty youth Peter Gonzales, through the grace of God, was led to the highest degree of happiness, that is to a true conversion, by which he at last obtained the crown of sanctity. Will you lose courage, and not turn in repentance to God, and implore His forgiveness, when you have been so unfortunate as to commit sin, and to offend Him, the working of whose mercy and generosity you have admired in the life of St. Peter? If you are boastful, and regret it, pray God to assist you to be more modest in future; if you have sinned by intemperance, pray God to rescue you from that horrible vice, and to lead you back to the virtue of temperance and abstemiousness, and if on account of former violations of the law of God you must submit to shame, sickness, disrespect, and other sad consequences, then be convinced that the punishment is not only deserved, but that it is also God's kind intention to lead you thereby to true salvation, and to

greater virtue and happiness hereafter, if you do not resist Him and His merciful guidance by giving way to indifference and hardness of heart; for punishment here below may always be looked upon as a grace, as a call to conversion, and as a divine remedy.

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## ST. WILLIAM.

(April 16.)

"Impure Temptations."

ST. WILLIAM, in company with other pious youths, led a godly life even when very young. In a town where he and his companions had asked alms, he was hospitably received into the house of a seemingly pious woman. Wishing to retire, after having prayed until a late hour in the night, the woman of the house entered his room, and made infamous propositions to him, but William said to her: "Leave, wretched creature, bound as you are in the chains of Satan: crazy, shameless, and impudent woman, cease speaking of what it is even sinful to think of. Make, if you can, the sign of the cross, and remember the day of your death, for you must die; do what I tell you that you may not be damned." Terrified at this unexpected reception, the woman left; but as urged on by the devil, she made another attempt, and threatened the pious youth, that if he did not fulfill her wish, she would imitate Potiphar's wife, and accuse him of having committed violence upon her person. St. William was shocked at such malice, and full of abhorrence, said to the woman: "Begone, daughter of Babylon; if through your falsehood I shall be punished in my body, Almighty God will give to me the double crown of purity. Remember how soon pleasure passes away, and how eternal are the torments of hell; think of the terrible day of judgment; standing before Christ the Judge, you can neither hide yourself nor flee from before Him; strike your breast, wretched woman, sigh and wash away your sins with bitter tears. Although myself a sinner, I will implore the divine mercy in your behalf. Go to church to-morrow morning, look upon the face of our Saviour, and confess your sins to a priest." The woman was very much touched by his words; she threw herself at the feet of the youth, and weeping, asked his forgiveness. William said to her: "May the Lord, who has created you, spare you, and give you time to do penance."

At the dawn of day, when the doors were opened, William left, and lifting up his eyes towards heaven, he said: "I thank Thee, O Lord Jesus, that I have escaped the snares of this woman; O let me never be separated from Thee!" When William returned to his companions, he said: "I have now

experienced in my own person, that the combat of the flesh is of long duration, and if the Lord had not been with me, my soul would now be in hell."

When William again went on a begging tour, and recited, as usual, the psalms, he thought of the woman who desired to effect his ruin; her beauty had taken such possession of his soul, that neither fasting nor prayer could keep him from thinking of her. Having had no rest for several months on account of her image being constantly before him, he finally determined to yield to the temptation, although he had resisted her at first, and he resolved to return into the world. He sold what he possessed, and wished to throw himself into the turmoil of society, but God was watching over his servant.

Feeling tired, William sat down and fell asleep; while in this state, he saw himself surrounded by an immense number of wild beasts, who with their teeth and claws threatened to destroy him. Filled with terror as to how he should escape, he said: "Help me, O Lord! You assisted me when the sinful woman tempted me, save me now from the teeth of these wild beasts; if Thou hearest me now, I will praise Thee as long as I live." After this prayer the beasts disappeared, and he awoke; he returned to his cell, and scourged his body in such a manner that the pain destroyed the desires of the flesh; he then kept so strict a fast for two years that he ate nothing cooked, nor would he touch either milk or eggs.

By the wild beasts is meant the danger to which man is exposed in regard to his purity. It would not be wrong to say that man lives, as it were, chained to a wild beast, from whose attacks he is obliged to defend himself. The wild beast is the attraction which the sin of impurity has for man, and the temptation is the more dangerous, because he is either outwardly tempted by the concupiscence of the eye, or inwardly by his own flesh, and by reason that the very desire to commit it is a sin.

It is true that one man is more easily tempted than another; but no one should consider himself safe. We read in the Old Testament of great and learned men who became victims to this vice, as for instance, Samson, David, and Solomon; and if men like St. William, who earnestly desired to live saintly lives, were endangered by such temptations, how much greater should be the caution exercised by ordinary persons! Avoid, above all things, as far as you can, not only the sin itself, but every temptation to commit it; avoid the imprudence of being alone with a person of another sex, or of going to balls; for although the sin itself may not be committed, the danger of having impure thoughts and desires instilled into the mind and heart is very great. We should also not only avoid looking at persons of the other sex, reading exciting novels, listening to love-songs, but also luxurious living, idleness, remaining in bed too long, or eating and drinking too much; and when the temptation assails you, remove it as soon as possible, by thinking of God, death, and of the day of judgment, according to the example of St. William.



If we would all remember the importance of living a chaste life, and how easy it is to fall into the sin of impurity, we would indeed use all means and precautions against committing it. If the cholera appears in a place, every one is filled with terror for fear that they may be attacked with it; they live moderately, and avoid exposing themselves to the least chance of getting it; but it is a thousand times better to die of cholera than to commit even once the sin of impurity. No one, therefore, can be called a Christian who is not careful to guard against this horrible ruin not only to the body, but to the soul; and he must scrupulously use every means of precaution, just as the cholera patient uses every remedy given to him by the physician in order to save his life.

We will now refer to what is known of St. William. He lived about five hundred years ago in Sicily, and received a truly Christian education. He excelled as a child and as a young man in the practice of true piety. The more he read of spiritual things, the more trifling and empty did the joys of the world seem to him. He soon discovered that Satan was always lying in wait for the soul of man, and he determined to leave the world, and to find a place where he could live and die with more safety to his soul; he, therefore, first retired to a hermitage, but afterwards entered a convent. The better he was known, the more was he respected, and he was finally made Superior of the convent. From that time many wonderful things are related of St. William. A terrible war at one time broke out, and the greater part of Sicily had been ravaged. The monks were filled with terror at the prospect of the approaching famine, and therefore demanded that their Superior should distribute at once among them the provisions that were stored away, and of which it was customary to give but a small portion at a time.

In vain did St. William reproach them for their want of confidence in God; they insisted upon having their demands complied with, and the Saint finally yielded to their wishes. A miracle now took place, similar to that performed in behalf of the poor widow of Sarepta, spoken of in the Scriptures. Astonished at the power possessed by their holy Superior, the monks confessed their error, and thanked God for His mercy towards them. By many other wonders did Almighty God fulfill in His faithful servant, and before the eyes of the world, the truth of the words in which He says: "To him that shall overcome I will give to sit with me in my throne." (Apoc. 3 : 21.)

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## ST. SIMEON.

(April 17.)

"Imperishable glory."

IN hearing the "Credo" intoned to-day at the High Mass, and the choir chanting the words: "Sub Pontio Pilato"—the thought struck us, how the disgrace of this man is proclaimed in all churches, schools, and families, and in all the catechisms in which the Apostle's Creed is to be found: and how it will be daily read and sung, even until the end of the world. The name of this noble Roman, who was the governor of Judea, is now a by-word in the mouth of every child on account of his weakness and cowardice, and of the injustice shown by him to our Saviour. His sin has been punished with eternal disgrace, and the judgment of the world has already been passed upon him: but the same has happened to all who have lived in opposition to Christ. They may have filled a royal throne, but before the Christian world they are now disgraced. Those, on the contrary, who have lived and suffered for Christ, are now venerated in all Christian countries, and will be throughout all time. The truth of this remark is illustrated in the veneration shown to the martyrs, who were destroyed like vermin from the face of the earth, but who now have all honor paid to them by God and man, while their judges are for ever disgraced and held in contempt.

When through the efforts of the emperor Constantine, in the fourth century, the Christian religion became firmly established throughout the Roman empire, Sapor, King of Persia, only hated it the more. He was a very haughty prince, and among his other titles styled himself the king of kings and brother of the sun. He would not suffer his subjects to believe in any thing which he did not believe in himself, much less permit them to profess the religion of his enemy, the Roman emperor. He therefore commanded that the Christians should be persecuted, and that the priests should be put to death, the churches burned, and Simeon, their Bishop, arrested. His orders were obeyed and Simeon, loaded with iron chains, was brought before the king; but Simeon was not in the least intimidated, and did not fall down before the king, as was then the custom in Persia. The king, irritated at such conduct, asked him why he would not show him due honor, since he had never refused to do so before. "I paid you all respect before, said Simeon, because I was not then asked to deny the true God; but now it would not be right to show you honor, since I have come to combat for my religion." Then the king commanded him to worship the sun, and promised him if he would do so, to give him many rich presents and whatever office was in his gift: if however he refused to comply with his wishes, not only he himself, but all the Christians should be put to death." "Why should I worship the sun, answered Simeon, when I refuse to worship you, who are more

worthy of worship than the sun? We only know one Lord, Jesus who was crucified." "It would be excusable, if you worshiped a living God, replied the king; but it is folly to worship a man who died on the cross; worship the sun to whom all pay homage." "You know not Jesus Christ," said Simeon; "He is the creator of man, and is the Lord of the sun, which became darkened at His death. He rose gloriously from his grave and ascended into heaven through His own power. The honor which you promise me, I do not want; Almighty God will prepare another and a higher honor for me." The king then commanded him to be kept for the present in chains, thinking that he would change his mind.

When Simeon was sent back into prison, Usthazanes sat at the entrance of the royal palace; he had been the instructor of the king, and was highly esteemed by the royal family. When he saw the holy prisoner, he rose up from his seat and respectfully saluted him; but Simeon reproachfully turned away his face from him, for Usthazanes was a Christian, and had allowed himself to be persuaded to worship the sun; he was so astonished at the treatment of Simeon, that he commenced to sigh and weep. He laid aside his splendid robes, and put on a black garment, as a sign of grief; he loudly lamented what he had done, and said: "Wo is me, wretch that I am; what have I to expect of the God whom I have denied!" The king hearing this, sent for Usthazanes, and asked him what misfortune had befallen him. He answered: "O king, something has happened to me, which causes me greater grief than any other misfortune that could have befallen me. I mourn now, because I am still alive, although I should have died long ago, and because I see the sun, which I have worshiped, not in truth, but only to please you." He then swore before the Creator of heaven and earth, that he never would be again induced to deny his faith.

The king, surprised at this sudden change in Usthazanes, became still more enraged against the Christians, believing that they had effected it by witchcraft; but being kindly disposed towards his former teacher, he endeavored first by persuasion, and then by threats, to divert him from his purpose. He said that the Christian religion was the invention of wicked people; but nothing could make Usthazanes abandon his purpose, and he firmly declared that he never again would be so foolish as to worship things created, instead of the Creator Himself. The king in his anger then commanded Usthazanes to be beheaded.

When brought to the place of execution, he begged the executioner to delay a moment, as he wished to send a message to the king, in which he made the following statement: "How much devotion I have shown to your family, O king, from my very youth until now, and with what zeal I have served your father and yourself, is not unknown to you. For my faithful services I ask only one favor of you, that I may not be considered a traitor or a criminal by those who do not know me. Allow the people therefore to know, that Usthazanes was



beheaded, not for having committed any crime, but because he was a Christian, and would not deny his God."

The king consented, and had the cause of his death proclaimed; for he thought that others would be induced to deny their religion, if they heard that no Christian, no matter what his rank, would be spared, since Usthazanes himself, an old man and the instructor of the king, had been beheaded.

Simeon hearing in prison of the martyrdom of Usthazanes, thanked God and earnestly beseeched Him to let him suffer on the same day on which our Saviour had drank the bitter cup. And it so happened, that the king determined to have Simeon beheaded in Holy Week. The king tried, however, once more to persuade him to deny his faith, but Simeon with the greatest zeal again defended the truths of the Christian religion, and refused to worship the sun. On the same day one hundred other Christians were put to death by command of the king, and Simeon was the last to suffer, in order that he might witness their martyrdom. When all were assembled at the place of execution, the high-priest again told them that their lives should be saved, if they would consent to worship the sun; but all refused to save their lives upon such conditions. While one after another was being beheaded, St. Simeon admonished and encouraged them, saying that by dying in such a manner they would gain eternal life; but to deny the Christian faith for fear of man, would be punished with everlasting death; and that to die for God's sake was the best of all good works. The martyrs after hearing the admonitions of St. Simeon, died cheerfully.

An old man, named Ananias, having trembled just before he was executed, one of the spectators cried out in a loud voice: "Shut your eyes, old man, and have courage; for you will soon see the heavenly light." The man who had spoken these words, was at once arrested and brought before the king. It was Phusikius, the master-mechanic of the royal palace, and he confessed his belief in Christ, saying: "I resign the honors you have conferred upon me; I wish to die with those whose glorious death I have witnessed." "Are you crazy?" replied the king; "do you prefer such a death to your honors?" "I am in my right mind," answered the officer, "but I am a Christian, and therefore, in order to obtain the mercy of God, I prefer death to earthly honors."

The king, irritated at these words had his throat opened and his tongue cut out, and thus he also died the death of a martyr.

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## BLESSED HERLUCA.

(April 18.)

*"Effects of good company."*

AN old Legend, entitled "*Bavaria sancta*," that is "*holy Bavaria*," relates the following of Blessed Herluca, who lived seven hundred years ago in Bavaria, where her memory is still held in veneration.

Herluca, when very young, like the greater part of mankind, had no other desire than to walk in the broad path which leads to perdition. She wished to live a proud and worldly life; but God came to her rescue by visiting her with a long and painful sickness. During her illness the vanity of earthly things became apparent to her; but as soon as she had recovered her health, she, like many others who promise to amend their lives when stretched upon a sick bed, forgot her good resolutions and again became enamored of worldly pleasures. God however visited her for the second time with severe illness, but when she was restored to health she acted in the same manner as before, that is, she made good resolutions while sick, but again returned to her former way of living after having recovered. The third time that the hand of Almighty God was laid upon her, she became blind of both eyes, in order that she might henceforth see with the eyes of her spirit. She then persevered in her good resolutions, and laid aside her worldly dress and her vain desires. When God had attained his object, He restored her eye-sight, and not only did she remain faithful, but she even arrived at a high degree of sanctity.

Herluca became converted by the visitations of the Lord, and advanced in the knowledge and practice of virtue by associating constantly with good and holy persons. At that time there lived a pious countess, named Adelaide, who had assembled around her several virtuous maidens, in order that they might practise together devotional exercises. The countess received Herluca into the little band, so that in such Christian society she was enabled to live up to the practice of her religion. She also became acquainted with Felicitas, a widow, who had retired into a convent, and who was afterwards canonized. This holy widow frequently admonished Herluca, to aid her in the attainment of true perfection. Herluca once told a lie in order to prevent a mistress from being angry with her servant. St. Felicitas said to her: "You have acted wrongly, because you have stained your lips with a lie; for it is not sufficient that a virgin should refrain from the company of young men; she should guard her lips from lying; for whenever truth is violated, bodily purity is of no value."

Not only did these excellent women have a beneficial influence upon the soul of Blessed Herluca, but holy men likewise consoled her, among whom were St. William, Abbot of the convent of Hirschau, and St. Theocarus, a very learned man, who became Bishop of Metz, and who died in the odor of sanctity. St.

William advised his spiritual daughter to remain longest in the place where she experienced the greatest devotion. When on a visit to the city of Eppach, she entered the church of St. Lawrence, where the holy Bishop Witkerpus is venerated, and there felt her soul filled with sweet happiness; she, therefore, remained in Eppach for the space of thirty-six years.

Herluca possessed a good friend in a very pious widow, named Douda, who had made great progress in Christian perfection. She was treated by this kind lady as if she had been her own child; but because she loved her in the Holy Ghost, she kindly reproached her for every fault she committed. Herluca once came home from church, feeling dispirited and cross. Douda asked her kindly: "Where have you been, and from whence do you come, my daughter?" "I have been to church," replied Herluca, "and have just come from there." "I can hardly believe it," answered Douda; "for if you had only been there, you would have brought home with you the lovely fruit of your devotion."

Associating all her life-time with such excellent persons, who as true friends were interested in her salvation, Herluca became more and more purified from her sins, and attained an unusually high degree of sanctity.

Nothing is said in regard to her death in the writings of the priest who knew her personally, and who wrote her biography. In what we have related of her, however, a profitable lesson is contained, for it shows us how important it is that we should cultivate the acquaintance of holy and religious persons. It can truly be said of young people, that their character depends upon the company they keep. How often does it happen, that a good young man who becomes an apprentice to some trade, is irretrievably ruined by frequently listening to impure words, and hearing religion mocked at; on the contrary it sometimes happens that a corrupt and wicked girl enters into the service of a good and pious family, where she only sees and hears what is becoming a Christian, and on that account is induced to become a truly virtuous woman. If your circumstances are such that you can choose your own company, look upon it as a most important duty, to avoid the society of worldly-minded persons, and seek that of the holy and virtuous. If, however, you are not acquainted with any person whose company would be profitable to you, follow the example of Blessed Herluca, who sought the friendship of the blessed in heaven. Above all things converse continually in spirit with God and our Saviour, and select some particular Saint, as did blessed Herluca, who chose St. Lawrence and St. Witkerpus, venerate and invoke them, and they will surely reciprocate the friendship you feel for them, and will give you many good admonitions, and obtain many graces for you by their prayers.

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## ST. FRONTO.

(April 19.)

"Onward and upward."

EVEN in the early time of Christianity there were many pious people who retired into distant and unsettled places; some did so on account of the terrible persecutions against the Christians, which they wished to avoid; others only for the reason that they might be free from the temptations of a worldly life, and serve God alone. To this latter class belongs St. Fronto, of whom a writer who lived at the same time (in the second century after Christ) relates the following facts:

"Fronto, the true servant of God, increased daily in the fear of the Lord, and became more and more disgusted with the life of the world. Filled with a desire for solitude, he assembled his friends, and said: 'What have we to do in common with this sinful world, the pomps and vanities of which we must renounce, if we wish to obtain eternal life? Up, let us go into the desert, let us not take any thing with us, but let us fight the good fight, in order to obtain virtue and eternal glory!'

"His friends consented; they took nothing but some vegetable seed and pick-axes to work the soil, and thus went into the desert, where Fronto addressed them as follows: 'The Lord in the Gospel says: Be not solicitous, saying what shall we eat or what shall we drink, or wherewith shall we be clothed, for after all these things the heathen seek. Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His justice, and all these things shall be added unto you. (Matt. 6 : 31, 32, 33.) Let us keep our promise, and fulfill the word of God in ourselves.'

"Having lived some time in the desert, Satan commenced to tempt them, so that they thought in their hearts that it would have been far better for them if they had remained in the world; for such a solitary life was too severe. They murmured, and said: 'What was Fronto's idea to bring us into this wilderness? Can not those serve God who live in cities and villages; and do those alone serve him who live in the desert? Do not many people who live in the world perform good works? What man can live without food, like the angels? We shall starve here. Watching, working, and fasting destroy our health and strength, so that we can hardly stand upon our feet.'"

Before we go any further, we will draw your attention to some important lessons to be derived from the conduct of the disciples of St. Fronto.

Every man is not called upon to lead such an austere life as did these hermits, or as many monks do, but having once arrived at a certain degree of mortification or of a truly Christian life, it is very wrong to retrace our steps in the onward march to heaven, to become lukewarm, and to desire again the comforts

of this life. The Catholic Church has therefore decreed, that if any one has been received into an Order, and wishes to leave it, he is allowed to enter a stricter one, but never one in which the rule is easier; for if he has had grace to reach a certain degree of perfection, he will have the more grace given him to remain there, and if he does not remain in the state of perfection, his soul will assuredly lose what he had gained in virtue and good works. To decrease in good works leads not to God, but to perdition; we must therefore renew our zeal in order to gain what we have lost; for in following the road to heaven, we are told to look not *back*, but look *upward*.

St. Fronto heard of the dissatisfaction of his brethren, and before they could make their complaint to him, he anticipated them by telling them not to turn from the way upon which they had entered, and not to draw down upon themselves by their murmuring the anger of God. He exhorted them to have confidence in God, who, if they remained faithful to Him, would take care of them also in the desert, and would not let them starve.

The admonition of St. Fronto caused them to be silent, but their uneasiness and sadness still remained. God Himself then honored and confirmed the words of His servant, for it always happens that if we are true and virtuous, we may be sure that God will not forsake us in our temporal necessities.

A rich man saw in a dream an angel of the Lord, who said: "You have sumptuous dinners, and my servants in the desert have no bread. Rise early in the morning, and send to them something of what I have given you, for I have chosen you to be the guardian of my flock. You must refresh my poor, who lead a spiritual life in the desert, and who have put their trust in me." When the rich man awoke, he told it to his family and friends, saying: "I would willingly send; but I do not know where these servants of God are to be found; who can show me the way to them? Tell me!" But no one knew anything of their place of abode.

In the following night the same thing happened to him; the angel of God again told him to carry food to the servants of God, and reproached and threatened him because he had as yet done nothing for them. Filled with terror he again told it to his friends, saying that he did not know where he could find the servants of God. One of them then advised him to load his camels with provisions, lead them into the street, and let them go whithersoever they would. If the command came from God, the camels would return by themselves; but if it was a temptation of the devil, it would be better to suffer a loss than to be tormented any longer. This advice pleased the rich man, and he followed it.

The camels, as is customary in the East, were tied one behind the other, and, without a driver, went in the direction of the desert, and proceeded immediately to the abode of the hermits, who were just singing the praises of the Lord. Fronto first noticed the camels, and after having finished the prayers, he said to his brethren: "Now, where are your lamentations? Behold, the

Lord in His power has sent us food; come, let us unload the camels that the poor beasts may rest awhile." Filled with astonishment and joy, they all gave thanks to God, and gathered from between the rocks some greens for the camels. Fronto kept only one half of the provisions, and the next day sent the other half back to the giver, out of thanksgiving to the Lord, and in order that his brethren might be kept from avarice.

The rich man in the mean time watched anxiously to see whether his camels would come back or whether they would be lost. His joy was great, when a few days afterwards he saw them return with one half of what he had sent. Full of gratitude to God, he divided that which St. Fronto had sent back among the poor and his friends, and from that time forth he every year about the same season sent ample provisions to the hermits in the desert as long as St. Fronto lived.

If you are walking in the pathway of Christian perfection, and meet with difficulties and misfortunes, you will show neither Christian prudence nor fortitude, if you go back, and care, as the world does, only for your body and for the goods of this world; but you will prove yourself to be a true soldier of Jesus Christ, if you advance courageously to the combat, and when the last day shall come, you can with truth say: "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith." (2 Tim. 4: 7.)

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## ST. HILDEGUNDIS.

(April 20.)

"Divine Guidance."

NOT far from Heidelberg, a town in the Grand-Duchy of Baden, Germany, there lies in a valley surrounded by woody hills, the village of Schoenau. In a Cistercian convent, long since destroyed by the Calvinists, lived and died seven hundred years ago St. Hildegundis, concerning whose life we will here speak, and whose biographer, a priest, who knew her personally, calls God to witness that he tells nothing but what is true.

In the neighborhood of Cologne, Prussia, lived a nobleman and his wife, who were blessed with earthly wealth, but not with children. For years they prayed, made pilgrimages, and at last, like Anna, the mother of the Prophet Samuel, they made a vow that if God would grant them a child, they would devote it to His service. Their vow seemed to have pleased God, for the wife brought forth not one child, but twins, two daughters, whose Christian names were Agnes and Hildegundis.



After the children had grown up under the tender care of their mother, the father thought it best to have them instructed and educated in a convent. He determined, in order to show himself grateful for the many and great benefits God had bestowed upon him, to make a pilgrimage to Jerusalem, and his wife having meanwhile died, he resolved to leave his daughter Agnes in the convent, but to take Hildegundis with him to the Holy Land. To accomplish the journey with greater safety Hildegundis had her hair cut, was dressed in boy's clothes, and was called Joseph. He took with him but one servant, who was to carry the necessary provisions; and they soon joined a troop of other pilgrims who were going in the same direction. On crossing the sea, however, the nobleman fell dangerously sick; and feeling his end approaching, he handed his money to his servant and entrusted to him his daughter. Soon after he died, and his body was thrown into the sea; while Hildegundis wept and lamented her forsaken condition.

Hildegundis and her companion reached Jerusalem, visited the sepulchre of our Saviour and other holy places, and then made their preparations to return home. But now another misfortune befell Hildegundis. The servant was a wicked man, and while they were waiting in the seaport of Akkon the sailing of a ship that was to carry them homeward, he secretly escaped with all the money, and left the maiden poor and forsaken, in a strange country, many thousand miles from her native place. But God abandons no one who trusts in Him. A pious man pitied the deceived and forsaken stranger and assisted the supposed youth. Her generous protector carried her back to Jerusalem and procured her a place in the house of the Templars, where she had an opportunity to become acquainted with all the remarkable places in the Holy City. She had been a year with the Templars, when a pilgrim, a native of Cologne and a relative of Hildegundis, came to Jerusalem and diligently inquired for Hildegundis and her father; having discovered the daughter, and learned her misfortune, he informed her that he was ready immediately to return with her to her native country. She consented to accompany him. They made the journey safely and had already reached a place near Cologne, when the companion of Hildegundis became suddenly ill and died, leaving to his young relative all that he possessed. After so long a pilgrimage, and so many dangers, the young orphan had thus again reached her native country, under the special protection and guidance of the Lord. Intending to rest in Cologne from the hardships of her long journey, she was invited by a priest to spend some time in his house, as he supposed the pilgrim to be a youth, and was desirous of hearing about the Holy City; and she accepted the invitation.

The priest whose guest she had become was, however, at the very time in great trouble. His sister, a pious nun, had been chosen Abbess of a convent in Cologne. A few of the sisters, however, had voted for a niece of the Archbishop of Cologne, and had succeeded in inducing the Archbishop to prevent the

installation of the Abbess elect. The priest was now obliged to apply in person to the Pope for redress, and as Hildegundis, or the supposed youth Joseph, spoke Italian fluently, and had often been to Italy, he entreated his guest to accompany him to Rome, which she consented to do.

When passing through a forest near the city of Augsburg, they were met by a man who carried a sack and begged Joseph to guard it a few moments for him, until he should return from the wood. The man was a thief and knew that those from whom he had stolen were in close pursuit of him, and the sack contained the stolen things. While the thief concealed himself in the forest and Joseph in the kindness of his heart stood watching by the side of the sack, the pursuers arrived, seized Joseph as the supposed robber, beat him cruelly and dragged him to the city. All his protestations of innocence were of no use; and since the sack was found in his possession, he was according to the laws of that time, sentenced to be executed. He begged only for the presence of a priest, in order to confess and to receive the Holy Communion; and to him Joseph related all that had happened. By the efforts of the priest the real thief was discovered in the forest. He, however, stoutly denied being the thief, and in order to find out the truth they made use of the ordeal of which we have already spoken in the life of St. Cunigunda (March 3.) Joseph stepped upon the red-hot iron without receiving the least injury and was set free; the thief burned his feet, and was therefore immediately executed.

Joseph, or rather Hildegundis, and the priest reached the city of Rome without encountering any further adventures, and successfully attained the end for which they had undertaken the journey. We shall now pass over other occurrences in the life of St. Hildegundis, and only show how after such an eventful life she at last reached the place of her real destination.

Returning from Rome, the supposed youth Joseph went to the city of Spire, Germany, and there visited the theological schools. While there, Berthold, a former soldier, who had become converted to God, entreated him to accompany him at once to Schoenau and enter the convent there. Some time before, the guardian angel of Hildegundis had revealed to her that she would enter the Cistercian convent at Schoenau, and before the close of the year there die a happy death. She looked therefore upon the request of the soldier as a call of Providence and followed him thither. Supposing her to be a young man, she was received as a novice in the convent, and the monk, who became her teacher, has left us also a sketch of her life, in which he speaks of the great zeal of his pupil in watching, fasting, studying, praying, and working; but by the providence of God no one became aware of her sex until after her death.

In her retirement from the world she was so violently and continually tempted by the evil one, that she was on the point of leaving the convent, when God in his mercy came to her assistance, in order that she might not lose the merits already gained.

She became suddenly very sick, and had to be carried into the infirmary of the convent. Here she remained during Lent, and became gradually weaker from day to day, until she died the week after Easter, on the very day she had predicted.

We have spoken but little of the religious life of St. Hildegundis: it was our intention to dwell upon the events of her exterior life, for in them God was glorified. We see her thrown into dangers to which women are seldom exposed, and each time she was saved by the providence of God and led to the place of her destination. And when at last her soul was in great danger of becoming faithless to its true calling, with a strong hand God saved her soul by sending affliction upon her, so that at the end of her days she could truly say: "Thou hast always led me, and Thy hand was over me."

Perhaps, dear reader, you are still young, and ignorant of what the future has in store for you; but you can always be sure that a merciful Providence is watching over you, and will assist you in time of need: and you should therefore turn all afflictions to the benefit of your soul. Remain truly faithful to God, guard against sin, trust in the power of prayer and the Holy Sacraments, reconcile yourself immediately to God by means of confession, if you have committed any sin, and you may be certain, that in all the circumstances of your life God will be with you, and will protect and guide you. Man may frequently abandon God, but God never abandons the man who has been faithful to Him.

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## ST. ANSELM.

(April 21.)

"Atonement for sin."

ST. ANSELM, when in his thirtieth year, was made Prior of the Convent of Bec in Normandy. In this capacity he distinguished himself by his great knowledge of man, and by his great zeal in leading to God the young, whose hearts he compared with wax on which the seal of instruction leaves a lasting impression. Some of the monks envied Anselm, because he had been chosen Prior while still a young man; but their envy was soon overcome by his sincere humility, gentleness, and kindness. His keenness of thought in his religious discussions with those over whom he presided, contributed much to their enlightenment; and although by nature inclined to a solitary and contemplative life, he with great self-denial exercised faithfully the duty of charity towards the sick, so that his friend Eadmer could with justice say of him: "Anselm was a father to the well, and a mother to the sick." Only after midnight would he seek his couch, and



the break of day would often find him still in prayer and meditation in his cell.

At a later period Anselm was unanimously chosen Abbot, and he exercised so wonderful an influence on the hearts of others, that one hundred and eighty persons joined the brotherhood of the convent by his instrumentality. His reputation was very great as a wise counsellor, and the entire day was not sufficient to satisfy those who either in writing or in person applied to him for advice.

Count Hugo of England had sent three urgent messages to Anselm, requesting him to come to England, not only because he wished to consult him regarding the establishment of a convent, but also because he desired in his sickness to have the spiritual assistance of his friend Anselm. The Abbot complied with the wish of Count Hugo. His reputation for wisdom and piety was so great that he was forced to remain in England, and was chosen Archbishop of Canterbury, although in direct opposition to his wish.

He very reluctantly accepted the high dignity of that office, which was at that time in the Catholic Church second only to that of the Pope; and on its acceptance St. Anselm entered upon the most stormy period of his life. King William (Rufus) exercised such tyranny over the rights of the Church, and made such unjust demands upon her, that the condition of the Church in England became almost insupportable. The exhortations, entreaties, and firmness of Anselm, who was not willing to jeopardize the rights of the Church, were answered on the part of the king by threats and oppression; so that at last the Archbishop was obliged to apply in person to the Pope, in order to consult with him as to what was best to do under such circumstances. On his arrival in Rome the celebrated and most pious Archbishop of Canterbury was received with great honors by the Pope, who declared that he would not consent to the intended resignation of his high office. For three years Anselm was absent from his see, prevented by the king from exercising the duties of his archiepiscopal office; after which time the king, while out hunting, was found dead in the forest. Anselm could not forbear weeping when he was informed of William's death. He had always hoped that God would hear his prayer for the conversion of the king. Henry the new king, wrote to Anselm, begging him to return to England and to be his counsellor; but he also wished to continue the injustice and usurpation of his predecessor, and to appoint the Abbots and Bishops, instead of having them appointed by the Church. After many tedious contentions, during which Anselm remained faithful to his king in all he thought right, but most courageously resisted his encroachments on the rights of the Church, he betook himself once more to the Pope, applying for redress. The king confiscated the estates and revenues of the Archbishop, because he would not yield to his demands; but Anselm in a letter written at that time, remarks: "I fear not

suffering, nor death, but I do fear sin and the censure of the Church, especially of that portion entrusted to my care."

After Anselm had spent eighteen months in exile in the city of Lyons, France, the pious sister of Henry at last effected a reconciliation. The Archbishop was received with every demonstration of joy in England, and after a long and difficult struggle he finally gained the independence of the Church. The efforts of the Archbishop were now directed towards abolishing the great abuses that had arisen in England, and he entered upon the arduous task with great zeal, wisdom, and perseverance.

Although overwhelmed with the burden of Church affairs, St. Anselm nevertheless lived a very self-denying life, and his bodily strength became greatly enfeebled by his watching and fastings; but by the blessing of God he reached the venerable age of seventy-six years. In Holy Week, on the twenty-first of April, eleven hundred and nine, having fallen dangerously ill, he requested them to read the Passion before him, and having come to the passage: "But you are, that have persevered with me in my tribulations; I therefore will give you the kingdom, which my Father has prepared for me,"—St. Anselm quietly yielded up his spirit.

Although he led a very active and busy life, St. Anselm was one of the most thoughtful and profound Doctors of the Church. By his researches he discovered truths that will be always regarded as of great value in theology. He was the first who clearly showed why forgiveness of sin can only and safely be obtained through Christ. In teaching the doctrine of the atonement through Christ, he says: "Sinning means not to render to God what we owe Him, but to disobey Him and to wound His honor. The crime of sinning requires an atonement for the injury done to the honor of God, and we must therefore do something, which we are not called upon strictly to do, just as he who inflict wounds upon another person, must not only restore his health, but must also compensate him for the pain he has suffered. Without such an atonement God is obliged to punish sin, or else the order in His kingdom would be disturbed, and the sinner and the Saint would be rewarded alike by Him. Such a state of things can be as little in accordance with the will of God, as that water can be dry and fire wet; for God will never permit a violation of His justice and order without demanding satisfaction or atonement. If man does not submit voluntarily to the Lord through obedience, the Lord shows him His authority and power by punishing him. The honor of God is His own, and no one can deprive Him of it; but this honor is also visible in the creation, especially in the fact, that all rational beings not only know, but also voluntarily do the will of God, thus honoring him. Whoever does not do so, disturbs the order and beauty of the government of the world, thus dishonoring God. It is impossible to escape from the will of God; for if we disobey His commands, He will surely insist upon our making reparation."

True satisfaction for our sins is only possible, if we.

"1. Render something to God, which we are not strictly bound to render. Sorrow, penance, and almsgiving are not sufficient to expiate sin, because it is our duty to practise them if we have offended God. There is therefore nothing in our possession that we could offer God as an expiation for sin.

"2. The atonement must be in accordance with the sin committed. The least deliberate sin is something very great, and can not be compared with any misfortune, if we consider it to be a violation of the will of God. And the satisfaction must be greater than the sin, since we are not permitted to commit a single sin, not if we could gain thereby the whole world; but such an atonement is beyond the power of man to render.

"3. Man by sinning commits robbery, for he stains and corrupts the soul that God has given him, and which was destined to be holy and happy, so that it can not attain its destiny, but rather becomes a living source of sin. This offense, this robbery of the soul, the property of the Lord, must be atoned for, must be expiated; but man can not do it, the sinner can not purify the sinner. The crime of sin and the corruption of the soul are of such immense weight, that they can only be outweighed by a rendering of what is greater than the whole world, greater than all that is not God, and consequently only God Himself can render the satisfaction which justice requires shall be rendered by man. Therefore the reparation can only be sufficient, if it is made conjointly by God and man; by God becoming man, and at the same time remaining God—His divine and human nature forming one and the same person—Jesus Christ. But His human nature was not to be created anew, as was Adam's, but He took His human nature from the human race, from man, else He could not have made a sufficient reparation for our race. Therefore as Eve was formed from the body of Adam, so the body of Christ was taken from the Virgin, in order that salvation might proceed from woman, as sin had proceeded from woman. But the God-man wished to render in expiation something for which He was not in duty bound. God could demand of Him obedience, but not suffering and death, because Jesus Christ was not a sinner. Consequently this was the true satisfaction since sorrow corresponded with the lust of sin. Pleasure brought man to ruin, suffering was to save him; and that the life of Christ outweighs all the sins of the world, is felt by every Christian, for every Christian would rather take upon himself all the sins of the world, than cause the death of the God-man. Therefore the sacrifice of His life must outweigh all sins, and there is nothing that can be imagined whereby it would be possible to save us sinners before God, but the great mystery of the Incarnation and Death of Jesus Christ Himself. And here the mercy and justice of God show themselves in their greatest glory, for He gives us His own Son to redeem us from sin who pays such a great price for the remission of our guilt."



## ST. TARBULA.

(April 22.)

"A woman's strength."

ST. SIMEON, a Bishop in Persia, whose memory we commemorate on the seventeenth day of this month, had two sisters; the one a virgin called Tarbula, and the other a widow. After Simeon had died the death of a martyr, during the persecution of the Christians in Persia, the queen became dangerously sick, and the Jews, in whom she had great confidence, excited in her the suspicion that the sisters of the Bishop had probably poisoned her in order to revenge themselves upon her for the death of their brother. By order of the queen, Tarbula and her sister, and the latter's servant, were put into prison.

One of the Persian high-priests and two other judges were charged with the trials of the sisters. The former was struck with the great beauty of St. Tarbula, and he sought to conceal the impression she had made upon him from his associates.

The first question of the judges was: "Why did you poison the queen? You have incurred thereby the punishment of death." "Why did Satan inspire you with such a wicked thought?" asked Tarbula. "Why do you accuse us unjustly? If you thirst after our blood, what prevents you from taking our lives? Do you not daily stain your hands with murder? But for the sake of God, we will die as Christians—we will not deny him; for He is our life, and Him alone do we worship and serve. How could we be guilty of poisoning the queen, since it would be as great a sin as to deny our God?"

When the judges heard St. Tarbula speak thus, they were greatly charmed by her beauty and prudence, and each of them thought to himself: "I will pray the king to spare her life, and will then marry her." At last the high-priest said: "Although your religion, as you say, forbids it, you nevertheless poisoned the queen, in order to revenge yourselves for your brother's death." "What great evil then did our brother suffer, that we should endanger the salvation of our souls?" answered Tarbula. "Although in your envy and wickedness you have put him to death, he now lives and rejoices in the kingdom of heaven, in comparison with whose joys the pleasures of earth are as nothing."

They were then led to their prison, and the following day St. Tarbula was told secretly by the high-priest, that he would endeavor to save their lives, if she would give herself up to him; but the pious virgin, like a true Christian heroine, scornfully said: "Unclean dog and enemy of God, cease uttering such shameful words in my presence. I am betrothed to my Lord Jesus Christ, and to Him I shall remain faithful; and be assured that He, who is free from sin, has the power to save me from unclean hands and from wicked snares and designs. I fear not death, and your threats and torments do not terrify me. For

this is the way that leads me to my beloved brother and Bishop Simeon, where I shall find comfort for the grief and the sighs that a separation from him has caused me."

The former decree that ordered the execution of all Christians in Persia, had been revoked, and the Christian priests only were now put to death. They would not therefore pronounce a sentence of death against Tarbula on account of her being a Christian. The judges therefore reported to the king, that the women were found guilty of the crime of poisoning the queen, and the king promised to pardon them if they would consent to worship the sun. To this the women replied: "We worship the Creator of heaven and earth, and we will not show to the sun the honor due to God; for the sun is only one of His works. Your threats will never persuade us to renounce the love of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ."

Having thus refused to accept the pardon of the king, they were sentenced to die, according to the judgment of the Persian priests, or Magi, who asserted that the queen could only recover, if the bodies of the accused were sawn in two, and the queen would pass between the dissevered parts. The high-priest sent once more to Tarbula repeating his offer of saving her life if she would listen to him; but she answered the messenger: "Impure wretches, why do you speak to me of things that are offensive to my ears? I long to die in order to obtain eternal life, and merely to prolong this short life I will never deny my faith and plunge my soul into everlasting ruin." The two Christian women were then put to death in accordance with the cruel and terrible sentence passed upon them by the Persian priests.

There is no doubt but that mankind in general are very weak, and should daily and hourly pray: "Lead us not into temptation;" but especially great is the weakness of women. How frequently and easily are well-educated women led away from the paths of religion and virtue, by associating with frivolous persons, by reading bad books, and by the allurements of worldly pleasures! How weak woman often shows herself, when in trouble or danger! And how easily is she brought to folly and sin, if offers and promises are made to her in her poverty! Not without reason did Satan in the garden of paradise first address himself to the woman, because he knew that she would fall an easier prey to his seductions. Still we meet with a resolution and strength of purpose in St. Tarbula, seldom found even in men. Is it because St. Tarbula was an exception to her sex, and endowed with a manly soul? No, for every woman can obtain this strength. It is the strength that comes from divine grace, that shows itself strong in the weakest. The more woman prays, the oftener she receives Holy Communion, and the more she endeavors to live a Christian life, the more courageous will be her heart. She has then not only a protector in God, who guides her destiny, but also one who will give to her soul courage, strength, and firmness in the hour of need. Woman, therefore, can never pal-

liate her sin by alleging as an excuse the weakness of her sex ; for He who strengthens virgins, wives, and widows, to undergo fearlessly the tortures of martyrdom, is also our God. Adhere, therefore, faithfully and firmly to the doctrine and practice of your holy religion, and by God's grace you will neither waver nor fall.

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## BLESSED GILES.

(April 23.)

"Duty of labor."

At the very time when St. Francis of Assisi, the founder of the Franciscan order, was animated by the Spirit of God to lead a life of such extraordinary poverty, but one which was nevertheless rich in merit and good works, there lived also in Assisi a holy man by the name of Egid, whose heart was filled with the same desire to serve God in poverty and humility. Having heard of St. Frances, Giles went to him and asked to be received as his disciple, a favor which the Saint cheerfully granted.

After being received into the order, Giles was sent to Rome. In accordance with the spirit of his vows, he lived by the labor of his own hands. He always heard Mass before commencing work, after which he would go to a forest, some distance from Rome, and there gather up wood, which he would sell in the city, thus making an honest livelihood.

At one time a woman who had bought some wood from him, wished to pay him more than its value, because she perceived that he belonged to some religious order, but he refused, saying : "I do not wish to become avaricious." In the same manner in harvest time, when he collected the ears of corn, persons would offer him some of the grain, but he refused, and said : "I neither have nor do I wish to have a granary." He was never ashamed to do any kind of honest work, and was often seen carrying the grapes to the wine-press, or gathering the fruit from the trees. Whatever he earned in this way, he used for his own support and for the benefit of the poor, and wherever he was employed by the day, he always asked permission to spend a few hours in prayer.

Giles desired not only to be poor, but to earn his bread by hard labor. Cardinal Nicholas venerated the piety of Giles so much, that he begged him to come and live with him, but Giles would not consent to do so, as he preferred to work for his support. The Cardinal then asked him to at least eat at his table whatever he had purchased for his daily food. Giles acquiesced in this proposition, and carried his bread every day to the Cardinal's table, and ate it there



Once a terrible rainstorm prevented Giles from working, and the Cardinal smilingly said : " You are to-day under the necessity of being entertained by me." But Giles went to the kitchen, and said to the cook : " How dirty your kitchen is ! I will put it in order for two loaves of bread." The cook accepted the offer, and at dinner time Giles brought with him to the Cardinal's table the two loaves of bread, thus frustrating his design of compelling Giles to accept something from him. On another occasion, when he was weather-bound, he cleaned the knives in the same kitchen for two loaves of bread.

On the approach of Lent Giles wished to retire to a lonely place in order to pray with more composure ; he therefore went with another saintly man to the chapel of St. Lawrence, situated on a high and distant mountain. But there was no chance of their working in such a place for their support ; the people did not know them, nor could they have given them any thing, as a famine prevailed there at that time. Three days after they had arrived at their retreat, such a deep snow fell, that Giles and his companion found it impossible to return ; but they did not lose their confidence in God's mercy, and therefore prayed and sang together His praises day and night. A pious man living in a village near by, thinking that perhaps some servant of God might have retired to the chapel, carried there some bread and wine, and found both men in the greatest destitution. He returned to the village and told the other inhabitants what he had seen. In a short time they collected so much bread, that the two holy men were well provided for during the whole season of Lent. Filled with gratitude at the mercy of God, Giles said to his companion : " We have implored the assistance of God before, but now we have to thank Him for the gifts we have received from Him, and to ask His blessing upon our benefactors."

The Apostle says : " If any man will not work, neither let him eat." (2 Thess. 3 : 10.) Whatever we eat is produced by the labor of man ; think for a moment, how many hands are necessary to prepare the morsel of bread which we eat. We should also remember, that it has caused the sweat to pour from the brow of some fellow-creature ; therefore justice and God's providence demand, that we should work, and be profitable to others.

St. Giles scrupulously carried out this principle. Although he wanted but little for his own support, he would receive nothing unless he had worked for it ; and whenever he was forced by circumstances to accept bread from others without having earned it, he would pray for his benefactors.

If you are rich and can live without working for your daily bread, it would nevertheless be sinful for you to remain in idleness ; you can at least become useful to others ; If you are unwilling to do so, than may you justly be compared to the insects that only devour, and who are baneful and useless.

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## ST. FIDELIS.

(April 24.)

"Catholic Militia."

THE dwelling where St. Fidelis was born is still standing and can be easily found; it is at present the post-office of the small capital city of Sigmaringen. His father was the mayor of the city, and being wealthy, sent his son Mark—the name our Saint received in baptism—in whom he discovered great talent, to Friburg, there to pursue his studies, as Mark had expressed a wish to become a lawyer. While at the university he attracted the attention of every one, for he not only excelled in his studies, but also in his exemplary conduct. He was especially careful to preserve the priceless virtue of chastity; he always avoided the society of females, and blushed when under the necessity of speaking to them.

Some young noblemen, just at this time, were desirous of making a foreign tour, and their parents wished them to be accompanied by an experienced tutor. Some of the professors of the University, whose advice they asked, recommended Mark as the best companion for them; and he, when the offer was made to him, accepted it at once. They spent six years in traveling through France, Spain, Italy, and Germany, visited the most remarkable curiosities in each place, and cultivated a taste for the arts and sciences. Fidelis made special use of the opportunity to perfect himself thoroughly in the French and Italian languages, which afterwards became of great advantage to him.

After his return, in the year sixteen hundred and ten, Mark practised law, and endeavored by means of his extraordinary skill and zeal to help every one who was dependent to attain his just rights, and on that account Mark obtained a large number of clients. The grace of God, however, convinced him that it would be far better to work for the spiritual than for the temporal welfare of men. He therefore decided to enter a religious order, where he could attain Christian perfection, and labor for the kingdom of God. He made his vows in the Capuchin convent at Friburg when thirty-four years of age and changed his former name, Mark, for that of "*Fidelis*," that is "Faithful." The Master of Novices on that occasion made a few remarks upon the following passage of holy Scripture: "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee the crown of life." (Apoc. 2 : 10.)

These words seemed to make such an impression upon the holy man, that he afterwards wrote them on the title-pages of all his books, instead of his own name. A part of his property he gave to his relatives, and with the remaining portion he made a foundation to assist young men who wished to become priests.

Fidelis was first sent to Constance, and then to Frauenfeld, to finish his theological studies; and as in his former literary pursuits, so also did he now

excel, for his talent was equaled by his energy and diligence. He was then appointed preacher, on account of his great skill and eloquence. He always prepared his sermons with great care, and endeavored not only to be solid in argument, but to be also clear and distinct in his delivery. He preached principally in Swabia and Switzerland, and not only Protestants came to hear him, but many hardened sinners were converted by his most excellent sermons.

Although it was contrary to the custom of the Capuchins to make any one Superior unless he had been in the order ten years, Fidelis was chosen Superior, after having been but six years in the order, on account of his great learning, piety, fidelity, virtue, amiability, and prudence.

Fidelis was very strict with himself. During Advent and Lent he never used cooked food, wore an old habit, and swept the church and convent with his own hands. Towards others, however, he was very kind; not only to his own brethren, but to all whom he could assist. He never evinced the least animosity towards any one, but on the contrary showed charity not only in his words, but in his works, especially to the sick.

Once when a pestilence had broken out among the soldiers, Fidelis went every day two or three times into the camp, sat or knelt down near the sick soldiers, and consoled and prepared them for the holy sacraments, which he also administered to them. He washed and dressed their wounds and sores and gave them refreshments. When he had nothing to give of his own, he asked the inhabitants of Feldkirch (Fieldkirk) for assistance, and as their liberality was not very great, he wrote to the Archduke Leopold for the means to relieve the wants of the sick, which petition was granted. In a similar manner did he act towards the sick in other places, showing himself to be a true disciple of Christ, who said: "This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you." (John 15 : 12.)

The stronger the faith and charity of a Catholic, the more painful it is to him when he sees others who do not possess the true faith, and the more will he endeavor to communicate to them the grace of faith. St. Fidelis perceived with greater clearness than others the truths of the Catholic Church in opposition to the doctrines of Luther, Calvin, and others, not only by reason of his splendidly-cultivated mind and his great literary attainments, but on account also of his travels, and of the thorough knowledge he had of the mass of mankind. To these was added the spiritual light which is given to those only who lead a truly Christian life. Fidelis was a faithful follower of Christ, ever battling with the heretical doctrines of the reformation.

He was destined by divine providence to work, live, and die in a special manner for the Catholic religion. The Canton of Grisons in Switzerland was at that time under Austrian rule, but the greater portion of its inhabitants had become Calvinists. Fidelis was commanded not only by the civil authorities, but also by an order from the Pope to go thither as a missionary. He was



ready at once, although he declared that it would cost him his life. His prayers at every Mass were never to commit a mortal sin, and to die for the faith. In the coldest winter-season, on the feast of Epiphany, he commenced his apostolic mission by going from one place to another, to preach the doctrine of the Catholic Church to the apostate congregation. The concourse of people who came to hear him was immense; and independent of the great good effected by his sermons and pious conversation, another circumstance made a great impression upon the Protestants, which was that Fidelis walked for hours through the snow bare-footed, and dressed in an old habit, in his efforts to collect the villagers; and then, feeble, hungry, and almost frozen, he would ascend the pulpit to preach the word of God, seeking nothing but the salvation of the erring sheep. He even climbed mountains, that were almost impassable on account of the deep snow, so that he might be enabled to visit the humble dwellings of the poor, there to carry the true doctrine of the Catholic Church, and bring back from error those who had been deceived. The only thing that Fidelis would accept was food, as he wished to be no incumbrance to any one, and after his labor a piece of dry-bread, for which he asked, was often his only refreshment, and a little hay in a stable his bed. By this apostolic conduct he gained the respect even of those Protestants who remained steadfast in their errors. Many however returned to the Catholic Church, and openly renounced their errors; some were even converted without having heard St. Fidelis preach. They went to the church out of curiosity to hear Father Fidelis say Mass, when, moved by the fervent devotion and deep veneration, with which he celebrated the holy mysteries, they felt sorry for their sins, and became filled with faith and respect towards the holy sacrifice of the Mass.

The conversions in the Canton of Grisons increased daily, and many of the very first citizens were, through the indefatigable zeal of St. Fidelis brought to the knowledge of the truth. Irritated at this, a respectable Protestant, Rudolph of Gugelberg, one day came to see Fidelis, challenging him to a public discussion. Fidelis accepted the challenge, and for several hours the different articles of faith were publicly discussed and defended between them before a large number of people; and Rudolph of Gugelberg was so confounded, that he was not capable of giving a satisfactory answer. Rudolph during the night went to see a Calvinistic preacher, to whom he related what had happened, and asked him if he had no new proofs, by which he could refute the Capuchin; but the preacher knew no other remedy than to heap abuses upon the Catholic Church. Rudolph being a man of good sense, soon found from the language of the preacher, how little foundation there was for the heresy of Calvin. Indignant at his former blindness, he went on the following day to St. Fidelis, renounced voluntarily and publicly his errors, and asked to be received again into the Catholic Church.

Discussions like this created great fear among the preachers, and they knew

of no better way to escape than to induce all the non-Catholic inhabitants of the Canton of Grisons to rebel against the Austrian rule and the Catholic missionaries. This was done; the peasants were told, that if they lost their lives in defence of the Calvinist religion, they would be rewarded with martyr's crowns in heaven. These preachers even went so far in their malice, as to forge letters, purporting to have been written by the Archduke Leopold, and intercepted by them, in which the soldiers were commanded to compel all to embrace the Catholic faith by force of arms.

We pass over the minute history of the insurrection, and come immediately to the end of the life of St. Fidelis. He was warned and himself foresaw what must happen to him. He was not however dismayed, but said: "If I am attacked by the Calvinists, I will do what the martyrs have done before me—I shall embrace death, and consider it a special grace of God that I have been permitted to die for my faith."

When the dissatisfaction had become very prevalent, and the insurrection had broken out in many places, Fidelis, nevertheless continued fearlessly to preach the doctrines of the Catholic Church. On April 24th, 1622, he preached at the village of Grush, when only Austrian soldiers attended the sermon; the peasants sent word to him to come to Sevis, as they wished to hear him. On his arrival there, he preached from the text: "One Lord, one faith, one baptism."

An Austrian captain determined to accompany St. Fidelis to Sevis with his soldiers; they went into the Church, and left a sentinel to watch the muskets near the church. Suddenly a shot was heard, followed by a most terrific noise; the insurgents had rushed upon and killed the sentinel, and one of them had fired from the church door at Fidelis; but the ball entered the wall. The soldiers ran for their guns, but outside of the church a large number of rebels had assembled, and the peasants drew forth the weapons they had concealed, and followed them. Some of the soldiers were killed, and others made prisoners. Fidelis endeavored to return to Grush; but he had hardly commenced his journey when twenty of the peasants attacked him with curses and maledictions of every sort. They called him a hypocrite, a seducer and a heretic, and beat and kicked him; some cried out: "Kill him!" others: "Renounce your Catholic faith!" and others again: "Give yourself up!" Finally one of them struck him with his sword on the back of his head. Fidelis fell, but soon rose again on his knees and asked forgiveness for his murderers, when they all rushed upon him at once, and completely crushed in his skull. More than twenty wounds were found in his breast, all the ribs on one side were broken, and one thigh pierced through.

In whom was the true faith to be found, in Fidelis or in his murderers? The answer to this question has been given by Jodocus, a Calvinist preacher. One of the murderers told him the whole circumstance and said that the harder they

struck Fidelis, the more friendly and beautiful became his face. Jodocus reflecting upon the circumstance came to the conclusion that only a true Christian could die so, and that Fidelis must have possessed the true faith. Jodocus became a Catholic, and from the place he had formerly preached Calvin's doctrine, he now cried out with a loud voice: "All that I preached to you before was heretical; the Roman Catholic faith is the true one; Fidelis has proclaimed the truths of the Gospel."

The little province where Fidelis was born, rebelled some years ago against its reigning prince, incited by the bad example of neighboring nations, and deceived by wicked tongues and newspapers; when the prince in disgust gave up the territory over which he ruled, and the province then became a part of Prussia. This change was accompanied by serious consequences not only in regard to the temporal, but also to the spiritual affairs of the inhabitants. Not only are the sons of the inhabitants of this Catholic province sent to garrison Prussian towns, where they are obliged to live among protestants, but protestant officers of different ranks are sent from Prussia to Sigmaringen. Orders will soon be given to erect churches for the accommodation of these protestant officers, and protestant preachers will soon be sent thither; mixed marriages, with their attendant curses, will follow, and the country, which has been purely Catholic is in danger of becoming a prey to Prussian fanaticism. May St. Fidelis watch over his countrymen, and protect them from the dangers which surround them.

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## ST. MARK.

(April 25.)

"Inspiration."

ST. MARK, the second Evangelist, was by birth a Jew, and was, as far as is known, converted by the Apostles after the resurrection of our Lord. Peter took him to Rome to assist him in spreading the Gospel; and because Mark by his constant intercourse with Peter was intimately acquainted with the doctrine of Christ, the Christians of Rome often asked him to write down whatever Peter had said to him concerning the Saviour. Mark did so, and it was for this reason that he wrote his Gospel. St. Peter was much pleased with the zeal shown by the Roman Christians for the word of God; he approved the Gospel written



by his disciple, and it can therefore be considered as coming from himself. Even at that time passages of it were read to the Christians during divine service. The doctrine taught by the Apostles and Evangelists can not for a moment be compared to sermons preached from the pulpits, or with books of devotion; for a preacher or a Christian writer may be very learned and pious, but nevertheless he may fall into error, of which we have many examples. On the contrary, whatever is contained in the Gospels or the Epistles of the Apostles, is, although written by men, approved by the Holy Ghost. Our Saviour has promised the Holy Ghost to His disciples in a two-fold manner: 1, that He would bestow upon them the gift of understanding what had been taught them; 2, That He would assist them at the right time with wise counsel. Our Saviour said: "The Holy Ghost will teach you all things, and bring all things to your mind, whatsoever I shall have said to you." (John, 14: 26.) If the Lord therefore gave to His disciples the power to teach what they had heard, then the same assistance must have been given to them when they wrote: for what is written is in a certain sense more important than what is taught by word of mouth, because that which is written can be promulgated in many places, and remains for a long time. When you hear the Gospel read, it is as if you heard Christ himself speaking; the Spirit who spoke through our Lord and His Apostles, is the Holy Ghost, and the Evangelist wrote as it were with His hand and pen.

In regard to the Gospel of St. Mark, its contents are not essentially different from those of the Gospel of St. Matthew; some think it probable, that the Gospel of St. Matthew was read to the Christians in Rome, that St. Peter added his explanations, which Mark wrote down, thus forming a new Gospel from the explanation, and from the already written Gospel of St. Matthew.

We can therefore explain the fact, why is it that in the Gospel of St. Mark, whatever is said in praise of St. Peter, is omitted; but on the other hand we see his guilt minutely described; humility caused Peter to acknowledge his own guilt in his sermons before the Christians of Rome, and to conceal whatever praise he deserved; and Mark wrote his Gospel in accordance with his direction.

The Gospel of St. Mark was written about fifty years after Christ. At Venice is kept a manuscript, which they claim to be the Gospel of St. Mark.

St. Mark went afterwards to Egypt by command of St. Peter, there to preach the Gospel. He is said to have been the first who established Christianity there. His labors were blessed with abundant fruits. By his instructions and miracles a great many were brought to the faith, and the idols, which had previously been worshiped, were destroyed. He first planted the cross in the country places and the small villages of Egypt: the greatest and most difficult work however was yet to be undertaken.

After Rome, the city of Alexandria was the first and most important city of

the whole Roman empire, and the capital of Egypt. Mark was commanded in a special vision to carry the good tidings of the Gospel of Christ to this great city. On his arrival in the Egyptian Babylon, something happened to him which seemed to be a good omen for his undertaking. Mark had torn one of his shoes; he went to the first shoemaker he met to have it mended. This man, piercing his hand with the awl, cried out: "O MY LORD!" Tertullian made the remark, that the soul of man is naturally Christian, since even the heathen, when very much excited, will not call upon his false gods, but upon the only true God, as it happened in the case of this pagan mechanic, the sentiments of whose heart prevailed over what he had been taught. The exclamation encouraged Mark, and he took occasion to begin speaking of the one true God, whom he, the mechanic, had himself invoked, and upon Mark's healing his wound in the name of Jesus Christ, Annienus—for this was the shoemaker's name—prevailed upon Mark to stay with him; and he, with his family, were instructed in the Christian doctrine and baptized.

Christianity spread rapidly in Alexandria, so that St. Mark not only converted many to the true faith, but the most of them attained Christian perfection by leaving the world and leading holy lives.

All at once those of the inhabitants who remained heathen became exasperated at St. Mark, and in order to save his life he had to leave the city; but before leaving he ordained Annienus Bishop of Alexandria.

St. Mark then preached the Gospel in other parts. He is said to have been present in Rome when SS. Peter and Paul were put to death. Afterwards he returned to Alexandria and found to his great joy that the Christians had increased in faith, in holiness, and in numbers. One day, when the heathens were celebrating the feast of their idol Serapis, they became angry at those who had embraced Christianity. They commenced to search for Mark, and found him celebrating the holy sacrifice of the Mass. Taking hold of him, they placed a rope around his neck, and dragged him the whole day through the city, so that the pavement was stained with his blood. He, however, praised and thanked God that he was found worthy to suffer for his name. In the evening they put him into prison, and the following day he was again dragged around the city, until he died, on the twentieth day of April, at the age of sixty-eight. The Christians collected his remains and buried them in a place where a church was afterwards built.

A thousand years ago they carried his relics to Venice, where he was chosen to be the Patron-Saint of the city, and the magnificent Cathedral of St. Mark was erected in his honor.

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## ST. TRUDPERTUS.

(April 26.)

"Envy."

ABOUT twelve miles beyond Friburg, Germany, at the foot of the Belgen, one of the highest mountains of the Black Forest, lies the so-called Munsterthal, (Valley of Munster). In this valley is a Benedictine Convent, the foundation of which was made more than a thousand years ago, and from whose sacred walls many preachers of the Gospel went forth to proclaim the religion of Christ in Upper Germany which was at that time partly enveloped in the night of Paganism. The convent with its fine church is still standing, but it may justly be compared to a body without a soul; for its former pious inhabitants have all departed. There was a time when rich donations were made in order to establish convents for the promotion of religion, but the time also came when these convents were abolished in order to obtain their possessions. The last Abbot of this convent in the valley of Munster gave direction, that they should cut on his tomb-stone the figure of soldiers playing with dice, and to write the inscription: "They parted my garments amongst them, and upon my vesture they cast lots." (Ps. 21: 19). This was done, and the tomb-stone stands in the church-yard near the convent. Not far from the grave of the last Abbot is also the spot where St. Trudpertus, the saint to whom this convent owes its origin and name, met his death twelve hundred years ago. What we know concerning this saint we will give literally, as we found it written in an old German manuscript.

St. Trudpertus was born in Scotland. His parents who came from France, were of royal descent. His brother was St. Rupertus, the first Bishop of Salzburg, Bavaria, and his sister was St. Erintrudis. Accompanied by his brother and sister he made a pilgrimage to Rome, in order to visit the church of the Apostles SS. Peter and Paul, and to receive the benediction of the Pope.

This pilgrimage took place in the year six hundred and forty after Christ, Boniface IV. being Pope. On their journey homeward St. Trudpertus remembered the words of his Lord and Saviour: "Every one that hath left house, or brothers, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my name's sake, shall receive an hundred-fold, and shall possess life everlasting;" and desirous of partaking of the promise of the Lord, he determined not to return to his parents and native country, but to renounce all his earthly possessions and to separate himself from his beloved brother and sister, so that he might spend his life in solitude and contemplation. He traveled over all Italy and finally reached an uncultivated valley in the province of Brisgaw in Germany, at that time called Numag. The pious pilgrim having at last found a place in which to spend his days in solitude, and in the service of his Saviour, in order to prevent all suspi-



cion, humbly begged of Count Ospertus, to whose estates the valley belonged, permission to settle in the place. The count not only granted his request but promised him also every assistance in his power; for he thought that this man of humble appearance, although of royal descent, was sent by the providence of God to his estates, to become a benefit to him and to his subjects. He presented Trudpertus with the place and with the surrounding wilderness, in order that he might establish a convent there. At a later period, he ordered six of his servants to assist St. Trudpertus in clearing the place.

After they had cleared a large space, the count had a house and a chapel built for St. Trudpertus, which was dedicated to God in honor of the Apostles SS. Peter and Paul by the Bishop of Constance. Here the Saint spent his days in the fear and service of his Lord, in prayer, watching, and fasting, laboring zealously and proclaiming the Gospel wherever he had an opportunity to do so, and Count Ospertus with his people went frequently to visit him in his solitude and to join in his devotions.

Towards the six men, whom the count had sent to assist him in his labors, he showed so much love and worked with so much zeal for the welfare of their souls, that they loved him as a father. So far, he had by the blessing of God, succeeded in all his pious undertakings, but the envy and hatred of the evil one were excited against him, and filled two of the six, who had formerly loved him, with such envy and malice against the pious man, that they murdered him at the entrance of his cell, when lying there in deep sleep. This occurred on the twenty-sixth day of the month of April, in the year six hundred and forty-four after Christ. He was buried four days afterwards in the presence of Count Ospertus, who had so loved and honored him in life.

We do not intend to speak here of the miracles that occurred near the grave of this Saint, nor of the later establishment of the convent: but of the sin that caused the murder of St. Trudpertus, the mortal sin of envy, which Satan has planted in the hearts of nearly all men. The envy of Satan destroyed the innocence and happiness of our first parents, and brought upon them and upon their descendants the punishment of death. Out of envy the first-born of Adam killed his brother; out of envy Joseph was sold by his brethren; envy was the cause why Saul sought the life of David; and instigated by envy the Jewish priests crucified the Saviour; and although envy does not always result in murder, it is in itself nothing less than murder. The envious man murders with his tongue, he attacks the honor and reputation of his fellow-men and destroys them by slander. We may succeed in concealing from the eye of man the sin of envy, that dwells within us, but we nevertheless commit murder in heart, just as we commit adultery in heart; it is for this reason that the Apostle John writes: "Whosoever hateth his brother, is a murderer." (1 John 3: 15.)

Let no one believe himself entirely free from the sin of envy; he only may think so, who does not know the true condition of his heart. If we therefore do

not wish to enter the other world with our souls polluted by this satanic crime, let us honestly examine our feelings towards our fellow-creatures, and if we discover in ourselves any feelings of displeasure on account of the advantages enjoyed by others, let us earnestly strive to banish it from our hearts, and pray God to bestow upon our fellow-men even greater blessings; for the Apostle James says: "Resist the devil, and he will fly from you." (James 4:7.)

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### ST. ZITA.

(April 27.)

"The Christian Servant."

NEAR the mount Segrati in Italy stands a chapel dedicated to St. Zita. The stones of which the chapel is built were taken from the small cottage of an humble peasant-girl, Zita. As we find a poor rustic cottage changed into a consecrated temple, so also did a similar change take place in Zita herself, for from the position of a poor servant-girl she has risen to the glory of a Saint.

Zita was the daughter of a poor peasant and even as a child was so piously disposed, that the simple words: "This pleases God," or "that displeases Him," from the lips of her mother was sufficient to prevent her little daughter from the commission of any sin. Zita was but twelve years old when she entered the service of the noble family of Fatinelli, in the city of Lucca, and her father who carried her thither earnestly exhorted her not to forget the teachings and example of her pious mother. It was hard for the little girl to be separated from her parents, to renounce the free and independent life of the country, and to be surrounded by other servants who treated her contemptuously on account of her youth and her want of experience and skill; but Zita soon learned to lay aside all childish and fickle habits, and became prudent and grave in her behavior. Prayer and labor cured her of any home-sickness. Every morning she rose early, so that she could attend holy Mass without neglecting her work, and every leisure hour she spent in contemplation, solitude, and devotion. The more her mind was directed towards her Saviour, the more faithful did she become in the fulfillment of her duties, and the more earnestly did she strive to imitate His moderation, His patience, and His gentleness. She especially implored the Blessed Virgin to procure her by her intercession those virtues whereby she had herself pleased God so much: humility, self-denial, purity, continual contemplation of God, and submission to His holy will. Zita had the right disposition of soul, necessary to the leading of a pious life. She was in constant fear of temptation and of her own weakness, but she knew that God

would strengthen her in her good resolutions ; and with all the power of her soul she sought to overcome every inclination to anger, every impure thought, and every disposition to idleness ; she avoided temptation, and when unable to do so, she watched carefully over herself, so that she gradually attained a rare degree of perfection. In memory of the Passion of Christ she lived an extremely mortified life, and gave joyfully to the poor, what she denied herself. She was most kind towards others, and for forty-nine years served the same family without during this long time having had one just complaint brought against her. She looked upon work as a duty, and was therefore never seen idle, and used to say : "A servant is not pious, if she is not industrious : piety in a servant, who is not disposed to work, is not true : " With Zita work ceased to be a trouble, because in her constant thought of the presence of God and of the Passion of Christ she changed it into a continual prayer, offering, and devotion, whereas with ordinary persons labor brings forth no reward as far as the future life is concerned, because the first condition of a good work—a pious intention—is wanting.

For the worldly-minded in general it is very disagreeable to live with persons who are filled with the spirit of Christ, and therefore, although young, Zita was always ready to serve and to assist wherever she could ; her presence, on account of her great modesty and purity, was very annoying to the other servants in the house. When she first came, they tried to make her as fickle and as frivolous as themselves, and not succeeding in their efforts, they called her a hypocrite, who endeavored by such means to obtain the particular favor of her mistress. They applied wicked constructions upon all she said, misrepresented her words, ridiculed and offended her whenever they could, and endeavored indulging in every species of slander, to render her odious to her master and mistress. No worldly-minded person would have patiently borne such treatment, but Zita in her Christian humility sometimes only remarked to her persecutors : "Pardon my fault, that our Saviour may also pardon you ; and do not be so angry with me, for fear that you might offend Him." Instead of leaving a place, where her great industry, fidelity, and pure intentions were constantly misjudged and rewarded only with contempt and abuse, Zita denied herself, took up her cross, and followed her Saviour ; exercised herself in the practice of the Christian virtues of patience, meekness, and of loving her persecutors ; and the more abuse she received from the world, the more comfort and joy did she find in God. At last, through the assistance of God, who directs the heart, and on account of the unchangeable meekness of Zita, all those who had persecuted the pious servant perceived the wrong they had done her, and manifested thenceforth the greatest respect and kindness towards her.

Having gained the full confidence of her employers, she was charged with the supervision of the entire household, and even with the care of the children. This was a very responsible position ; for not only were the family and the num-



ber of servants very large in those times of civil war, in which the house of Fatinelli took a prominent part, but the house itself was also the frequent rendezvous of persons of all ranks and conditions. Amid so many occupations, and surrounded by so much noise and confusion, Zita's soul remained quiet and firm in the Lord; for she had accustomed herself, although overburdened with labor, to be continually occupied with God, so that she prayed while working, and worked while praying. The writer of Zita's biography speaking of her holiness, says: "She possessed the true piety of the Saints; she was not satisfied with observing the mere outward forms of a Christian life, but the love of God penetrated her very heart and soul; she was not one of those who are more ready to pray to God than to forgive an offense, to visit the church rather than to fulfill their duties, to give also rather than to abstain from foul language or to overcome their passions.

St. Zita regarded the education of her master's children as one of the most important duties with which she was charged. Although she could neither read nor write, she had been instructed by Christ, and she taught the children how to lift up their hearts to God, to walk in his presence, to always speak the truth, to be charitable towards the poor, to love their parents, to honor old age, in short, she planted the seed of every virtue in their hearts as much by her example as by her words.

In her capacity as stewardess she was never imperious towards the other servants, never annoyed them, but became the friend and comforter of all as often as they were in grief and sorrow. She interceded for them when they had committed a fault, and because her Christian soul was animated with the spirit of Christ, she evinced great interest in the salvation of the other servants. Not by thoughtless zeal, nor by the mere sound of words, that frequently result in nothing, but by means of her kindness and charity, by her example and holy prayers, and by her kind exhortations at the right time, did she lead them to the source of living faith. Although very kind, meek, and forbearing, and manifesting frequently her disapprobation merely by a grave silence, she nevertheless expressed very decidedly her horror of slander and of immodest language and manners.

Being herself poor, she was full of kindness towards the poor, employed all the wages and presents she received for their support, and comforted and admonished them not to lose the merit of their poverty by showing dissatisfaction with their humble condition in life. When in her great charity she had spent all her own means, she begged her master and mistress and the friends of the house so urgently and heartily in behalf of the poor, that they never could resist her entreaties.

Having grown old, enjoying as she did in the highest degree the respect and love of Count Fatinelli and his family, she was no longer regarded

by them as a servant but as a dear friend: they desired her to desist from all labor and to spend her time in pious devotions; but Zita refused the kind offer because her work did not disturb her intercourse with God, and because her axiom was: "The hand occupied with work, the heart with God."

And thus she fulfilled to the last her holy calling, imitating both Martha and Mary: working industriously like Martha, and sitting at the feet of the Lord like Mary, listening and speaking to Him.

Zita, the model of a true Christian servant, died on the twenty-seventh of April in the year twelve hundred and seventy-nine, having served from her earliest childhood up to her sixtieth year in the family of Count Fatinelli: To her can be truly addressed the words of the Lord: "Well done, good and faithful servant, because thou hast been faithful over a few things I will place thee over many things; enter thou into the joy of the Lord."

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## ST. DIDYMUS.

(April 28.)

"Tercial purty."

IN the year three hundred and four after Christ, during the persecution of the Christians in the Roman empire under the Emperor Diocletian, Theodora, the daughter of a noble family in the city of Alexandria, was imprisoned because she had devoted her heart and soul to Christ.

Some time after she was brought before the judge Eustatius, and asked to what position of life she belonged. "I am a Christian," replied Theodora "and through Christ freed from sin. In regard to my birth I am free born." "Why do you not marry?" asked the judge. "On account of my love for Jesus Christ," was the reply. "He became man, freed us from destruction in this world, and has promised us life everlasting. Therefore I intend to live as a virgin, in order to remain faithful to Him."

The judge told her, that according to the decree of the emperor, Christian virgins had either to worship the gods or to be given up to dishonor; and he exhorted her urgently to sacrifice, in order not to bring disgrace upon herself and her family by being taken to a house of ill-fame. But Theodora said: "God looks at my intention; He knows my heart; if I am violated by force, not having the power to resist, I do not break my vow of chastity; it would be just the same, as if my head, hand or foot were cut off by force and not through any will of my own. My determination is to remain faithful to God and to keep my vow. To Him I recommend my purity. He is Lord over all; He

has the power to protect me, if it pleases Him, and my trust shall be in Him." The judge then declared, that having expressed herself in such a manner, he could no longer spare her without becoming faithless to his lord the Emperor. St. Theodora replied: "As you are afraid of disobeying your lord, so also am I determined not to deny my Lord." The heathen judge could not comprehend the firmness of a Christian virgin, and therefore granted to her three day's time for consideration, swearing that if she would not then yield, she should be given up to prostitution. But Theodora told him: "The time of respite has already passed. God, who will protect me from unfaithfulness, changes not with time; therefore delay not to do what you think proper."

Three days later Theodora was again brought before Eustatius, and threatened with the immediate execution of his order; but she fearlessly replied: "I made the vow of chastity in my love for Jesus Christ, who came to teach us purity; He will know how to protect His servant;" and the judge having remarked, "we will see, if Christ will sustain you in your obstinacy,"—she continued: "God, who knoweth all things, and who hath preserved me pure until this day on account of His promise, will also protect me from the wicked who desire to violate the person of His servant."

Thereupon they brought her into a den of vice, but she implored God fervently to lead her out again unviolated, and to free her, as He once had led Peter forth from prison, that all might recognize her to be His servant. It appeared however as if the prayer of the virgin had not been heard: for from among the dregs of the city, who had collected around the house, was a soldier, who in the presence of all went into the house. The frightened virgin fled into the darkest corner of the house, but he, whom she looked upon as her destroyer, was the one sent by Almighty God to save her. Didymus, a most faithful servant of Christ who profited by every opportunity to labor in His service, had disguised himself as a soldier, and he now said to Theodora: "I am not what I appear to be; I am your brother in the faith, and have come to rescue you, the servant of God, and the bride of Christ. Exchange your dress for my military attire, and you will be able to leave this place without being recognized by your persecutors." Theodora saw that God had sent Didymus to rescue her from the claws of the devil, and having followed the advice of her liberator, she left the house, Didymus remaining in her place.

Soon after a second person entered to satisfy his wicked desires; but how great was his astonishment in finding a man instead of a woman. He had heard before that Christ had changed water into wine, and he now supposed that a woman had been changed into man. Didymus however told him frankly what had happened, and he was in consequence immediately brought before the judge and questioned as to why he done so. "God told me to do it," was his reply. "Tell me at once the hiding place of Theodora" said the judge, "or I will make you confess by means of the rack." Didymus answered: "By the faith I have



in Jesus Christ, the Son of God I know not where Theodora is; but I know that she is a servant of God, and that she has remained pure, for God has not confounded her hope in Him." The judge then asked him his profession, when he answered: "I am a Christian, and a citizen of the kingdom of Heaven."

The judge then threatened him again with the rack, if he would not at once offer sacrifice to the gods; but Didymus replied: "I have already proved to you, that I am a soldier of Christ; I acted thus in order to protect the virgin Theodora and to confess publicly my faith. I fear not your tortures, I will not sacrifice to false gods, even if you should cast me into the fire." The judge then pronounced the sentence: "On account of your great boldness you will be beheaded; and because you have disobeyed the imperial decree, your body shall be burned." Thereupon Didymus exclaimed: "Praise be to Thee, O God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, that Thou hast not disdained my humble efforts, that Thou hast rescued Thy servant Theodora, and crowned me by means of this sentence!" Didymus gave the most beautiful proof of love, and reached the highest degree of holiness by sacrificing his own life for one who was his sister in Christ. He obtained also a two-fold crown of martyrdom by dying for his faith in Jesus Christ, and for the honor of a virgin.

Although the saintly virgin Theodora was convinced that she would not offend God, even if her person had been violated by force, yet her horror of being polluted was so great, that she accepted the noble sacrifice of the life of Didymus in order to preserve her purity; and St. Didymus himself preferred rather to die than to permit the violation of a Christian virgin. If these two Christians who were enlightened and animated by the Divine Spirit looked upon the loss of life as a much smaller evil than the loss of purity, although lost involuntarily, what an unmeasurable evil must not a life be voluntarily deprived of chastity! There is no sin which more closely resembles suicide, than does the sin of unchasteness. Every other sin may be atoned for by the sacrament of penance, and the sinner be restored to his former condition, with the exception of the suicide, for he can destroy life, but can not restore it; and thus every one can stain his innocence, his purity, but not restore it; for once lost, it remains lost for ever, like a life that has been put an end to. There is something mysterious in innocence or virginal purity that will manifest itself at the day of resurrection; but we know that no repentance and no atonement can restore it, if once lost. Sincere sorrow can only save the soul of the unchaste from being eternally lost, but it cannot effect for that soul the obtaining of that great distinction and glory of which St. John speaks in his revelation: "And the voice which I heard was the voice of harpers, harping on their harps. And they sung as it were a new canticle, before the throne, and before the four living creatures and the ancients; and no man could say the canticle, but those hundred forty-four thousand who were purchased from the earth. These are they who were not defiled with women: for they are virgins; these follow the

Lamb whithersoever he goeth. These were purchased from among men, the first fruits to God and to the Lamb." (Apoc. 14 : 2-5.)

## ST. ROBERT.

(April 29.)

"Blessings of the Saints."

ST. ROBERT was the descendant of a noble family. Even in his earliest youth, when his religious instruction had scarcely begun, he manifested a desire to devote his life to God, and therefore entered, when only in his fifteenth year, a Benedictine convent near the city of Troyes, in France. Having at an early age reached a high degree of perfection, he was chosen Prior of his convent, and but a few years later Abbot of the convent of Tonnere. The monks of the latter convent wished to have a distinguished man as their Abbot, but they desired to act just as they pleased; and when Robert endeavored to enforce a strict discipline among them, they showed themselves so unmanageable that all his efforts were frustrated. Robert did not wish to retain an office which through the disobedience of the members of the convent would not enable him to accomplish any good thing, and he therefore resigned the dignity and left the convent.

Not far from Tonnere lived seven hermits, who led a life of contemplation and penance. Having heard of the eminent piety of Robert, they entreated him to become their teacher and spiritual guide, and Robert having consented to live with them, they followed him to the forest of Molesme, where they built themselves huts of branches and a small chapel. The reputation of the godly and austere lives of the hermits gradually spread far and near and the inhabitants of the neighboring villages and towns visited them and provided them abundantly with all the necessities of life. The hermits, who had been accustomed to work very industriously for their support, now became more careless, and lived much less self-denying lives, than they had done formerly. St. Robert endeavored with all his power to re-kindle in them the fire of their former pious zeal, but finding that all his exhortations were useless, he left them.

Having been informed, that in the wilderness of Hauz there was a society of monks who spent their time in prayer, contemplation, and in working industriously for their support, Robert went thither, and having become acquainted with his excellent character, the monks chose him as their Prior. The monks of Molesme however were now ashamed that St. Robert had left them on account of their disobedience, and they therefore joined a stricter order, and succeeded

in obtaining an order from the Pope commanding Robert to return to Molesme. Yet, although they had promised to amend their lives, the majority of them still continued in their disobedience, and only a few of them showed themselves worthy of the company of their holy Abbot. In union with them he was allowed by the Pope's Legate in the city of Lyons, to withdraw from the others in the convent, in order to live strictly according to the rule of St. Benedict.

Accompanied by the few faithful Benedictines, he retired to a forest near the city of Dijon, where denying themselves all comfort, they lived in cells, according to the pious desire of their hearts. They slept only four hours, prayed and worked, and lived only upon roots and herbs. The Duke of Burgundy built them a convent which afterwards became an abbey, and the monks inhabiting it were called Cistercians, after the name of the forest Cisteaux, in which the convent stood, and as at a later period many convents adopted the same rigid rule that St. Robert had introduced in the Abbey of Cisteaux, they were also called Cistercian Monks.

Meanwhile the monks of Molesme again applied to the Pope, and being without an Abbot, requested the Holy Father to send St. Robert back to their abbey. They confessed their former sins and promised solemnly to obey him strictly, if he would again consent to be their Abbot, adding that his presence was most necessary for their spiritual and temporal welfare. St. Robert was therefore directed by Rome to take charge of the abbey of Molesme, and in obedience to the will of his superiors he left Cisteaux and returned to the convent of Molesme, where he remained until he died in the Lord in the year eleven hundred after Christ.

Every Christian knows that man can not benefit himself more in this world than by leading a pious life, for the more strictly he obeys the laws of God, the greater is and will always be his happiness; he knows also how useful and beneficial a saintly man is in this world, because he labors incessantly to mitigate the want and wretchedness of mankind, and because through his example, exhortation, and prayer he leads others to God and to the practice of a holy life. It is sometimes forgotten that the Saint even after his death can still be a blessing to man on earth; and yet this is the case.

After the death of St. Robert his body was laid out, and two sick persons having in full confidence touched his garments, were instantly cured, so that the sadness of the monks of the abbey was changed into loud rejoicing on account of the miracle. Many other miraculous cures occurred in the church of Molesme, which St. Robert had built in honor of the Mother of God. A nobleman from Lorraine, old, sick and blind, who had heard of the many miracles wrought at the grave of St. Robert, was brought by his relatives to Molesme, where he watched and prayed, and humbly and sincerely confessed his sins near the tomb of the Saint. He had already spent a whole week in



pious exercises without feeling himself in the least relieved, and his relatives were just upon the point of leading him out of the church in order to return home, when at the entrance of the church he threw himself once more on the ground, and bathed in tears repeatedly called upon St. Robert, and fervently prayed God, for this Saint's sake to show mercy to him; and behold! he suddenly recovered his eye-sight, and though a minute before so deeply afflicted with sorrow and pain, he now burst forth into tears of joy and loud praises of thanksgiving. On his way home he was hospitably entertained by a nobleman at Tudela, whose wife had been so lame for seventeen years, that she could no longer walk. Having heard of the miraculous cure of their guest, the nobleman's wife was carried to the grave of the Saint, where in answer to her fervent prayer her lameness was entirely cured.

At the time of the canonization of St. Robert, witnesses were questioned under oath in regard to the miracles that had occurred upon asking the intercession of the deceased. The documents of the investigation containing these testimonies are still preserved. Among them is the testimony of Oddo, at that time Abbot of Molesme, who declared that a woman brought her daughter, who had been born blind, to the grave of St. Robert, and having watched there during the night, the daughter was enabled to see: that another blind person recovered her eye-sight by rubbing her eyes with earth taken from the grave of the Saint;—that a dumb person was enabled to speak by taking a little of the earth in the mouth, that a crazy monk was taken to the grave of St. Robert: was there cured of his madness: that a boy, whose eye had been dangerously injured, was instantly cured when brought by his brother, (who was a monk), to the grave of the Saint: and that a priest and a layman, who were both lame, and had been so for eleven years, were both cured of their lameness: several Abbots, whose monasteries were not far from that of St. Robert, wrote the Pope a letter, in which they say: "We hear continually from the people of the neighborhood, that a great multitude of the lame, blind, and dumb, and others afflicted with different diseases crowd daily around the grave of Robert in the church of Molesme, and by the intercession of the Saint recover their former health."

Other Saints also have been, after their death, a blessing to many sufferers, when invoked in a spirit of confidence. We may therefore be convinced that the Saints in their love continually pray for us, and that on account of their intercession and merit we are delivered from many deserved punishments and favored with many unmerited benefits. It is therefore a blessing for us, and a gain for the Catholic Church, whenever a new Saint enters heaven, and on that account we should joyfully praise and thank God.

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## ST. CATHARINE OF SIENA.

(April 30.)

"Patience with others."

FEELINGS of compassion and love for friends and kindred are instinctively planted in the hearts of almost all men, and the Christian is required to cultivate and nourish their growth in his heart. He must however endeavor with all his strength to eradicate from his heart all traces of egotism, vanity, envy, and every disposition to slander—faults which are frequently found in persons to whom Christ is still a stranger. How sensitive are such persons when they meet with even a slight affront; what impatience do they manifest with the faults of their fellow-beings, while for themselves they demand the greatest forbearance from others. Every Christian knows, that by sincere conversion and self-denial he has been made a new man; and as soon as he was thus transformed into a likeness of Christ, he obtained also that degree of charity which enabled him to bear injustice and offenses with wonderful patience and with a continual increase of kindness towards others. None of the Saints have ever been without this virtue of patience, so necessary to true holiness. We possess a complete history of St. Catharine of Siena, but we will select from it only such facts as show the extraordinary degree of patience possessed by this Saint.

St. Catharine, who lived about five hundred years ago, was a contemporary of St. Catharine of Sweden, concerning whom we have already spoken on March 24. While still a child she gave many proofs of an uncommon firmness of character and of great patience in her intercourse with others. When she was but ten years old, her mother sent her once to a priest to have a mass offered in honor of St. Anthony; she met the priest in the vestry, and as the mass was just about being commenced, Catharine remained in the church praying. This kept her away from home a little longer than her mother expected, and the latter being a passionate woman, scolded and even cursed her daughter when she returned from her errand. Catharine bore the unjust and unreasonable reproaches of her mother in silence, but she afterwards said to her in private: 'Mother, when I have committed a fault, punish me; but I entreat you, never to curse me on account of my faults, for that is not becoming a woman of your age, and it gives me great grief.'

Catharine was but twelve years old when her worldly-minded mother commenced to busy herself to find a brilliant match for her lovely daughter, and wished her therefore to appear always beautifully dressed. Catharine, who had already determined in her heart to live unmarried, refused to comply with the demands of her mother, and in order to be no longer troubled with such requests, cut off her splendid hair. Her troubles, however, on this account were only

increased. The members of her family abused her continually in word and deed; they deprived her of the little room she had formerly occupied, so as to prevent her from indulging in her private devotions, and they compelled her to do the kitchen-work. The young Catherine, however, already began to manifest great firmness of character. She bore in silence and in patience the abuses of her relatives, and her heart was filled with love for Jesus Christ, although persecuted by those whom she had always loved and honored; and she finally said to them: "I am now convinced that God has accepted my vow of chastity, and I owe Him greater obedience than I do you; I will rather suffer all that you can inflict upon me than change my determination. If you will keep me with you, I will willingly be your servant; but if you drive me away, then the Lord, to whom I have vowed fidelity, will not leave me unprotected."

Such patience and firmness in the end conquered the scruples of her mother, and her father, who commanded that in future no one should disturb Catharine in her pious devotions, saying, that a pious life would bring a greater blessing upon them all than would a brilliant marriage and a life spent in the service of the world.

Having no longer to perform the menial offices of the household, Catharine employed her whole time in prayer and in works of the most noble charity.

In the city of Siena was a poor woman, whose body was entirely covered with leprosy. None of the servants of the hospital would nurse her for fear of contagion, and she was just upon the point of being removed from the city. St. Catharine had heard of it and Christian compassion animated her to take care of the woman. She brought her daily all she needed, served and nursed her, but the more sacrificing the love of Catharine, the more did the woman show herself ungrateful and wicked. If everything was not immediately done according to her humor, she scolded and abused Catharine in a most outrageous manner. Catharine suffered such treatment most patiently, and even excused herself most humbly when she had remained a little longer in church than the woman thought proper; just as if she had been a hired servant and the beggar a princess; and she continued her Christian ministrations until the death of the afflicted woman.

St. Catharine had become a member of the third order of St. Dominic, by which she was bound to practice certain religious exercises, but not obliged to enter a convent. To the same order belonged also a woman named Palmerina, who was constantly engaged in prayer, and who had given all her property for pious purposes; but who, in spite of her zeal for religion, was full of the spirit of pride and malice. She envied and hated St. Catharine to such a degree that the mere sight of her or the mention of her name provoked her to anger. She reviled and slandered St. Catharine incessantly, although Catharine did everything in her power to make her change her malicious and unchristian sentiments. When Palmerina became ill, Catharine, in the kindness of her heart,



offered to nurse her ; but in her fury Palmerina ordered the saintly virgin to be driven from her house. At last death approached, and without having received the Holy Sacraments, Palmerina lay for three days and nights delirious and dying. During this time Catharine had most fervently prayed our Lord to forgive this haughty soul, and show mercy to her. God heard the prayer of the faithful servant ; through this grace Palmerina recovered her senses, she became conscious of her wickedness, and a sincere penitent after receiving the Holy Sacrament.

God visited St. Catharine with still more grivous trials, so that she gradually reached the highest degree of holiness and perfection. A certain Andrea, a sister of the third order, had a cancer in her breast, so dreadful and disgusting from its intolerable odor, that no one would nurse her. St. Catharine offered herself as nurse, and was accepted with joy. Although the disease is a very protracted and tedious one, Catharine never for a moment lost her patience and gentleness, and without evincing the least disgust or abhorrence she washed and dressed the wound with great care and attention.

The more perfect a human soul becomes, the more it is hated by Satan, and with the more zeal does he attempt to destroy it. This has been found to be the case with all Saints, but especially so in the case of St. Catharine. After some time the Evil one so disgusted her with the horrid sight and smell of the cancer, that Catharine was on the point of abandoning the poor sufferer. The saintly virgin however made a last effort, and assisted by the divine grace succeeded in overcoming her weakness. Being frustrated in this, he endeavored to tempt the heavenly patience of St. Catharine in another way. He caused the sick sister, who was less able to resist his temptation, to conceive an aversion to her benefactress, which was finally changed into hatred and shameful suspicion. If Catharine was not the whole day with her, she accused her of being in bad company, and by-and-by the devil so completely mastered her, that she even told the most outrageous falsehoods concerning Catharine. The other sisters of the order believed the slanders of Andrea, and in their malice began also to revile Catharine ; but although the circulation of such calumnies must have been most painful to so pure a virgin, St. Catharine nevertheless continued to exercise charity towards the wicked Andrea, and prayed most frequently to God in secret to make known her innocence. The Lord answered her prayers ; in a vision Jesus Christ stood before her, holding in His right hand a golden crown ornamented with pearls and diamonds, and in His left a crown of thorns, saying : " Dear daughter, thou must be crowned with both of these crowns : thou canst choose which one to wear in this life ; the other will be preserved for thee after thy death." Catharine replied : " Long ago, O Lord, I sacrificed my will to Thine, but since it is Thy will, that I should make a choice, I prefer always to imitate Thee by suffering here below," and she seized with her hands the crown of thorns and pressed it with such force upon her head that she felt the stings of the

thorns for some time after the vision had vanished. Comfort and strength had however been given to her to bear in patience the disgraceful slander as long as it pleased God.

While nothing could disturb the saintly virgin in her holy determination of benefitting her calumniator, her mother acted quite differently upon the occasion. Having heard that the sick woman had slandered her daughter, she became very much enraged and said to St. Catharine: "Did I not forbid you to nurse this miserable woman? Now you are rewarded for what you have done. She has ruined your reputation; I shall no longer look upon you as my child if you continue to see her." St. Catharine fell on her knees before her mother, and replied: "Dearest mother, does God cease daily to benefit the sinner on account of his ingratitude? The Saviour effected the salvation of the world at the very moment when it had disgraced Him. If I leave Andrea, she will die for want of care; she is now misled by Satan, perhaps by the grace of God she will see her faults, and repent of her sins;" and the pious Catharine begged as a favor that her mother would permit her to nurse her calumniator, and she continued in her charitable work, and never used an unkind word towards the sick sister. At last the latter felt how wickedly she had acted towards the innocent Catharine, and bathed in tears implored the pious virgin to forgive her. Catharine embraced her, and forgave and comforted the repentant sufferer, who now confessed her horrible ingratitude to all who visited her, and declared that Catharine was not only innocent of all of which she had been accused of, but that she was indeed a true Saint.

How agreeable to God was the inexhaustible patience of St. Catharine, was made manifest by the following event. On her way home from the church Catharine met a young and poorly-dressed man, who begged her for some clothes. Catharine went aside, took off her skirt, and gave it to the beggar. He was not satisfied with what he received, but said: "I am also in want of linen, give me a shirt." She told him to follow her home, and there she gave him one of her father's shirts, besides other garments. He was not even yet satisfied, and said: "What shall I do with this skirt? there are no sleeves in it. Give me also a pair of sleeves!" Other persons would have lost patience, and would have angrily sent the shameless beggar away, but Catharine, without showing the least trace of anger or impatience, separated the sleeves from her own dress and gave them to him. This kindness of heart seemed to make him only more bold and shameless, for he said: "I have a companion in the hospital who is also in need of clothes. If you will send him some, I will carry them to him." Catharine wished also to satisfy this demand, but she had nothing more of her own to give, and dared not take more clothes from her relatives; she therefore said kindly to the beggar: "I would like to give you my dress if I could only go without it, but I have no other one to wear. I beseech you therefore not to be angry with me because I can give you no more." The

following night, while engaged in prayer, Catharine beheld a vision in which Christ appeared to her, having the appearance of the beggar, holding in His hands the garments with which she had presented Him, but which were now resplendent with gold and precious jewels ; and He then made known to her how much her charitable action had pleased Him.

St. Catharine died on a Sunday, in the year 1380, and her body now rests in the Dominican church in Rome.

Although every Christian may not be called upon to perform the heroic deeds of the Saints, they are nevertheless bound to practice the virtue of patience, which virtue is within the reach of every one, and one which all are in duty bound to practice. The true Christian should never be impatient, for patience is a sure sign that his piety is genuine, and proceeds from the Holy Ghost. He may be most zealous in praying, in being present at divine service, in receiving the Sacraments of the Church, but if he is without patience, then is his piety only pharisaical. If however he endeavors to bear with the faults of others, if he suffers wrongs in patience, then may he see by what happened to St. Catharine, how dear he is to the sacred heart of God.

He has the power to cultivate the growth of this beautiful Christian virtue, if He only uses the same means by which St. Catharine rendered her patience invincible—to be always mindful of the Passion of Christ, and if about to give way to feelings of impatience, to think of Him who was crucified for the sins of the world ; and from the depths of his heart let him say : “ Lord, for Thy sake I will bear it in patience.”

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## EASTER.

IF CHRISTMAS, the first of the three principal feasts of the Ecclesiastical Year has always been to the faithful a feast of joy, reminding them of the BEGINNING OF THE REDEMPTION, of the Birth of Him who was to save mankind from sin and eternal perdition, and re-open heaven, their lost inheritance,—the second principal feast, EASTER, is certainly in a higher degree a feast of joy to all Christians, reminding them of the PERFECTION OF REDEMPTION through the Son of God, who by his Passion and death washed away the sins of mankind, reconciling them with His Heavenly Father, but who, by His resurrection, the greatest and most glorious of all His miracles and the clearest evidence of His Divinity, crowned His whole work with the seal of perfection; thereby assuring the glorious resurrection of His faithful servants to an eternal and happy life. For this reason is the joy and exultation of the Church so great at Easter. On no other festival of the year does she sing so many joyful praises, at no other season does she chant the Alleluia so often as now in honor of Christ risen from the dead. “Alleluia! this is the day, which the Lord hath made; let us be glad and rejoice therein!” Thus speaks the Church repeatedly during the holy services of to-day, inciting all the faithful to rejoice. This holy joy of the Church however is not limited to a few days, but lasts during the whole season, from Easter-Sunday to the Octave of Pentecost, and is known as the Paschal season, during which, without interruption, Alleluia and hymns of joy and jubilation are sung by the faithful in honor of the risen God-man.

An appropriate type of this solemn feast was the Phase or the Pasch of the Jews, instituted in commemoration of the miraculous deliverance of the Israelites from the bondage of Pharaoh. On this feast each family was obliged to kill and eat a lamb, (the Paschal lamb), in grateful commemoration of the preservation of the Israelites from the sentence of death passed on all the first-born of Egypt, for they were saved by the blood of the lambs which they put upon both the sides and upper post of the doors of their houses. In contrast to the meaning of the Jewish Pasch, the feast of to-day reminds us still of our more miraculous deliverance from the bondage of Satan through Christ, who was sacrificed for us upon the cross as the true Paschal lamb, by whose blood we have been saved from the perdition, with which we were threatened by the sword of divine justice.

## INTROIT OF THE MASS.—Ps. 138.

"I arose and am still with Thee, Alleluia. Thou hast laid Thy hand upon me, Alleluia. Lord, Thou hast proved me, and known me; Thou hast known my sitting down and my rising up." Glory be to the Father.

With these words of the royal Prophet, through whom our Saviour had predicted His resurrection from the dead, the Church very properly commences the Mass of to-day, which is devoted to the feast of the resurrection of our Lord.

## PRAYER.

O God, who this day didst open to us the approach to eternity, by Thy only Son victorious over death, prosper by Thy grace our vows, which Thou dost anticipate by Thy inspirations. Through the same Lord.

## EPISTLE.—1 Cor. 5: 7-8.

"Brethren: Purge out the old leaven, that you may be a new paste, as you are unleavened. For Christ, our pasch, is sacrificed. Therefore let us feast, not with the old leaven, nor with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth."

The Church admonishes us by these words of the Apostle, that redeemed from sin through the death of Christ, our true Paschal lamb, and re-born through baptism to a pure and wonderful creation, we should carefully remove from ourselves the old leaven, that is sin, in order to celebrate with a pure and sanctified heart the solemn feast of Easter. St. Bernard has a beautiful instruction on this Epistle, reproaching the Christians at the same time for the sins and manifold excesses committed by them on this day; he says: "Christ, our Paschal lamb has been immolated. Let us embrace the virtues He teaches us from the cross; humility, patience, obedience, and love. But let us also earnestly consider what is recommended to us on this sublime festival of the Resurrection; for, beloved brethren, Christ is risen to-day; He will not return, but has passed over; He did not walk back on the same road, but passed over it. Therefore the feast of Phase, which we celebrate, is not a return, but a pass-over. We have grieved during the past days, and given ourselves up to penance, prayer, meditation, and self-denial. When we have wept over our sins, why should we return to them? Shall we be as inquisitive, as loquacious, as slothful and careless, as vain, suspicious, slanderous, and irritable as we were before, and become slaves of other sins which we have deplored during these days? I have washed my feet, shall I defile them again? What! make the resurrection of the Redeemer a time for sin and an occasion for relapsing! From this time rioting and drunkenness again commence, unholy conversations and impurities are renewed, just as if Christ had risen for the committing of

these crimes, and not for our purification ! This is not a pass-over to a better, but a return to a more wicked life,"

GOSPEL.—Mark 16 : 1-7.

"At that time : Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of James, and Salome, bought sweet spices, that coming they might anoint Jesus. And very early in the morning, the first day of the week, they came to the sepulchre, the sun being now risen. And they said one to another : Who shall roll us back the stone from the door of the sepulchre ? And looking, they saw the stone rolled back : for it was very great. And entering into the sepulchre, they saw a young man sitting on the right side, clothed with a white robe : and they were astonished. Who saith to them : Be not affrighted ; ye seek Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified : he is risen, he is not here, behold the place where they laid him. But go, tell his disciples and Peter that he goeth before you into Galilee : there you shall see him, as he told you."

This Gospel relates the same event contained in the Gospel of yesterday, how the pious women went early in the morning upon which the Saviour rose, with sweet spices to the sepulchre, that they might anoint Him, but received the glad tidings, that Christ was already risen.

According to a venerable tradition our Saviour after His resurrection appeared first to His blessed Mother ; for it was only right that she who felt the greatest interest in the sufferings of her Divine Son, should be the first, to whom the joy of His resurrection was announced. Our Saviour next appeared to Mary Magdalene, who remained at the sepulchre after the other pious women had left : He appeared afterward to the other holy women, and to Peter and then to the disciples, who were on their way to Emmaus, and He finally appeared late in the evening when the doors were shut, to the Apostles, with the exception of Thomas. To all these did the Lord appear on the first day of His resurrection.

Of the Gospel of this day St. Gregory makes the following just application : "Beloved brethren ! You have heard that the holy women who had followed the Saviour, arrived with the aromatic spices at the sepulchre, loving Him dead as they had loved Him in life. This shows us what should be done in our holy Church, for as it is necessary for us to hear what happened, we should also consider how best to imitate it. We, who believe in Him who died for us, truly bring aromatic spices to His sepulchre when, filled with the odor of virtues, we seek the Lord with a disposition to perform good works. The holy women, however, who came with sweet spices see Angels, because souls animated with holy desires walk in the odor of sanctity and always behold the heavenly host."

But let us consider what is represented by the Angel seen sitting on the right side ; for what is represented by the left side but the present life, and



what by the right, but life eternal? Therefore it is written in the Cantic of the Canticles. (2 : 6): "His left hand is under my head, and His right hand shall embrace me." As our Saviour, therefore, had already passed over the corruption of the present time, it was only just that the Angel who had come to announce His eternal life should sit on the right side. He appeared clothed with a white garment, because he announced the joy of this solemnity, for the whiteness of the robe signifies the splendor of our festivity. Shall we say this of our or of His solemnity? In truth we say it of both, of His as well as of our own solemnity; for the resurrection of the Lord was our feast, because it brought us back to immortality; but it was also the feast of the Angels, because by calling us to heavenly things, the number of Angels was completed.

On His and our festival, therefore, the Angel appeared in a white robe, because the loss of heaven was repaired by bringing us back to heavenly things through the resurrection of our Lord. But let us hear how he accosted the holy women: "Be not affrighted." As if he meant to say: "Those may be afraid, who do not love the advent of the heavenly spirits; those may be terrified who oppressed by their carnal desires despair of ever becoming the associates of Angels. But *you*, why are you afraid? since *you* see those with whom you will live for ever?" Hence St. Matthew, describing the apparition of the Angel, says: "His countenance was as lightning, and his raiment as snow;" for in the lightning is contained the terror of fear, but in the snow the symbol of purity.

The resurrection of the Lord, as the greatest and most glorious of all his miracles, as the crown and zeal of all His divine actions, is as such the most evident and the most magnificent proof of His divinity, and therefore the surest testimony of the truth and divinity of His doctrine, and the firmest foundation of OUR FAITH in the Son of God. St. Ambrose says: "It was an unheard-of wonder, that the same man worked the two-fold miracle, to resuscitate and to arise Himself, to show that within Him existed the resuscitated man and the resuscitating God."

Hence our Saviour so often predicted His resurrection and appealed especially to this the greatest wonder of His Omnipotence, to induce man to believe in Him. The resurrection of our Lord was therefore used by the Apostles as a means of propagating the doctrine of Christ. They called themselves witnesses of His resurrection, and wherever they preached the Gospel, they appealed to the undeniable fact of the resurrection of our Lord; thereby converting thousands to the faith in Him whom they had mocked while upon the cross, but whose divinity had been proved by His resurrection. In this sense St. Paul justly remarks: "If Christ be not risen again, then is our preaching vain and your faith is also vain, for you are yet in your sins; but now Christ is risen from the dead, the first fruits of them that sleep." (1 Cor. 15 : 14, 17, 20.)

The resurrection of Christ is also the surest confirmation and the most glo-

rious verification of OUR HOPE, and on this topic St. Augustine says: "The Son of God presents to us in His resurrection a great miracle and a great example; a great miracle, to confirm our faith; a great example, to animate our hope. For our Saviour has by His resurrection perfected the great work of redemption, thereby confirming in us the hope of our resurrection unto life eternal."

It is on this account that St. Peter says: "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy hath regenerated us unto a lively hope, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. Unto an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, and that can not fade, reserved in heaven for you." (1 Peter. 1 : 3-4). It is at the same time a type of our own resurrection and the pledge that, although destined to die as a punishment for our sins, we shall not remain in death, but shall gloriously rise again to an eternal and happy life. In reference to this, St. Paul says: "By a man came death, and by a man the resurrection of the dead; and as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all shall be made alive." (1 Cor. 15 : 21-22). St. Athanasius, also alluding to it, says: "Christ risen from the dead has made the life of man a continual feast of joy; no sorrow, no fear should further interrupt our quiet; our hope is no more wavering, no more uncertain; as our Master is risen never to die again, so shall we die, never to rise again to this perishable life."

The resurrection of our Lord should teach us to rise from the terrible death of sin, by which we are deprived of the spiritual life of divine grace, so that we may rise to a newer and a better life, and one pleasing to God, so that we may indeed become partakers of the fruits of the death and of the resurrection of our Saviour. To this the Apostle admonishes us in accordance with the Gospel of to-day, saying: "We, who are dead to sin, how shall we live any longer therein? Know you not, that all we who are baptized in Christ Jesus, are baptized in his death? For we are buried together with him by baptism unto death; that as Christ is risen from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we also may walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection. Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin may be destroyed to the end that we may serve sin no longer. For he that is dead, is justified from sin. Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall live also together with Christ. Knowing that Christ rising again from the dead, dieth now no more, death shall no more have dominion over him. For in that he died to sin, he died once, but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God. So do you also reckon that you are dead indeed to sin, but alive unto God in Christ Jesus our Lord. Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, so as to obey the lusts thereof. Neither yield ye your members as instruments of iniquity unto sin; but present yourselves unto God as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of justice unto God." (Rom. 6 : 2-13.)

On Easter and the following days, it is the custom among many Christians (particularly in the Greek Church of Russia) to give beautifully-colored eggs, called Easter-eggs, to relatives and friends, especially to children, and to eat them after joyfully congratulating each other.

In former times it was one of the lawful perquisites of the parish priests, more especially in the country, to collect eggs from the members of the congregation at Easter by the sextons; but this custom has been abolished.

In regard to the origin of this custom, it proceeded from the strictness of the fast, usual in former times, where, as we have before remarked, during Lent not only was the use of flesh-meat forbidden, but even the other productions of the animal kingdom, and for that reason the use of eggs was also prohibited, on account of the great nourishment which they contained. According to some councils the sale of eggs was forbidden during Lent. It was therefore very natural that on the feast of Easter every one rejoiced that they were permitted to use eggs; the more so, as at the beginning of Spring eggs were more abundant than during the winter. It is therefore easily explained why at this season eggs were selected as presents.

There still exists a prayer for the blessing of eggs.

The blessing of the Easter-lamb had the same signification as that of the eggs.

Although the circumstances mentioned above are considered to be the origin of the custom, the Easter-eggs have in reference to this solemn feast a higher and a more symbolical meaning. The egg, according to the opinion of old pagan nations, is the figure of a new life, which is still buried in its shell and which must be brought forth by heat. In a similar manner has Christ planted in our souls the seed of a new Christian and eternal life, which however can not germinate to a true and endless life but by the quickening grace of God. As the egg is in this way a type of spiritual regeneration in Christ, so it may be considered as a figure of the God-man, who was kept in the grave, and who by His resurrection burst the fetters of the tomb; it is no less a type of our resurrection from the grave unto a new, happy, and heavenly life. Thus viewed, the custom of Easter-eggs is to the faithful a matter of instructive consideration.

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### EASTER MONDAY.

IN the early ages of Christianity the whole Octave of Easter, that is, the whole week from Easter-Sunday to Low-Sunday, was a season of uninterrupted solemnity, a continued feast, with joyous exultations of the Church for the resur-



rection of the Lord. During this whole time no other feast was celebrated, and the faithful abstained from all servile work, as on Sundays and other festivals. Although this last custom is no longer observed, the whole Octave of Easter is still celebrated in our churches with great solemnity: all other feasts being excluded, and transferred to other days, that the faithful may during the whole Octave meditate exclusively on the celebration of the glorious mystery, that the Son of God had through His resurrection conquered death, and thus confirmed His great work of the redemption of the world.

EASTER-MONDAY and TUESDAY have been at all times solemnly celebrated, and belong as feasts of the first class, to the highest of the whole Ecclesiastical Year, and were for a long time everywhere kept, like Sunday.

INTROIT OF THE MASS.—Exod. 13.

“The Lord hath brought you into a land flowing with milk and honey, Alleluia: and that the law of the Lord may be ever in your mouth, Alleluia, Alleluia. Give glory to the Lord and call upon his name, declare his deeds among the Gentiles.” Glory be to the Father.

The Church in the Introit of the Mass of to-day, compares the entrance into heaven, opened to us by the death and resurrection of Christ, with the entrance of the Israelites into the land of promise, which had been effected by the sacrifice of the Easter-lamb, and admonishes us to honor with grateful hearts the law of the Lord, and to praise and glorify Him for His infinite mercy and goodness.

PRAYER.

O God, who hast bestowed remedies on the world in the paschal solemnities, grant to Thy people heavenly gifts, we beseech Thee, that they may both deserve to obtain perfect liberty, and arrive at life everlasting. Through our Lord.

EPISTLE.—Acts 10: 37-43.

“In those days: Peter standing in the midst of the people said: Men, brethren, you know the word which hath been published through all Judea: for it began from Galilee, after the baptism which John preached, Jesus of Nazareth: how God anointed him with the Holy Ghost, and with power, who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed by the devil, for God was with him. And we are witnesses of all things that he did in the land of the Jews and in Jerusalem, whom they killed, hanging him upon a tree. Him God raised up the third day, and gave him to be made manifest, not to all the people, but to witnesses pre-ordained by God, even to us, who did eat and drink with him after he rose again from the dead, and he commanded us to preach to the people, and to testify that it is he who was appointed by God to be judge of the

living and of the dead. To him all the prophets give testimony, that through his name all receive remission of sins, who believe in him."

In this lesson of the Acts is related to us how Peter, after the resurrection of Christ and the descent of the Holy Ghost, preached the Gospel first to the Pagans, in order to convert them to the belief in Christ, who rose from the dead, and to receive them into the Catholic Church. The first Christians, who formed especially the churches of Jerusalem, and the neighboring cities of Judea, had hitherto been Jews; the light of the true faith, however, was now to extend also to the Pagans, of whom Cornelius, the Roman centurion, his family and friends were the first who received the grace of faith.

Cornelius, although outwardly a Pagan, was a pious man, who worshiped the true God, gave abundant alms, and certainly desired with a sincere heart to obtain a knowledge of the truth, which was given to him in a wonderful manner. Praying one day he beheld in a vision an angel of God approaching him, who bade him send for Simon Peter, at that time in the city of Joppe, in order to learn, what he should do. Cornelius obeyed this heavenly command by sending two servants and a soldier to Peter.

The following day, when these three men were on their way, Peter also had a vision, by which our Lord instructed him, that the heathen, considered by the Jews as unclean, should also be received into the Church of Christ.

Peter at first did not understand the will of God; but when the messengers of Cornelius came to him, he at once accepted their invitation, and accompanied them to Cesarea. Here Cornelius and many other heathens, his relatives and friends, had assembled to be instructed by Peter, who, hearing of the vision of Cornelius, at once perceived that these Pagans also were called to the kingdom of God. He therefore addressed them, as related to us in this Epistle, and called their special attention to the great wonders of our Saviour, how He had been crucified by the Jews, but rose again on the third day by His divine Omnipotence, and how being glorified, He was appointed by God to be the judge of the living and of the dead, how all the Prophets gave testimony of Him and that by the power of His name all who believed in Him should receive remission of their sins.

In the Epistle of Pentecost or Whit-Monday are related to us the wonderful effects produced by Peter in the house of Cornelius.

GOSPEL.—Luke 24: 13-35.

"At that time: Two of the disciples of Jesus went the same day to a town, which was sixty furlongs from Jerusalem, named Emmaus. And they talked together of all these things which had happened. And it came to pass, that while they talked and reasoned with themselves, Jesus himself also drawing near went with them. But their eyes were held that they should not know him.

And he said to them: What are these discourses that you hold one with another as you walk, and are sad? And the one of them, whose name was Cleophas, answering, said to him: Art thou only a stranger in Jerusalem and hast not known the things that have been done there in these days? To whom he said: What things? And they said: Concerning Jesus of Nazareth, who was a prophet, mighty in work and word before God and all the people, and how our chief-priests and princes delivered him to be condemned to death and crucified him. But we hoped that it was he that should have redeemed Israel: and now besides all this, to-day is the third day since these things were done. Yea, and certain women also of our company, affrighted us, who before it was light were at the sepulchre. And not finding his body, came, saying that they had also seen a vision of Angels, who say that he is alive. And some of our people went to the sepulchre: and found it so as the women had said, but him they found not. Then he said to them: O foolish, and slow of heart to believe in all things which the prophets have spoken. Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and so to enter into his glory? And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded to them in all the scriptures the things that were concerning him. And they drew nigh to the town whither they were going: and he made as though he would go farther. But they constrained him, saying: Stay with us, because it is towards evening, and the day is now far spent. And he went in with them. And it came to pass, whilst he was at table with them, he took bread, and blessed, and brake, and gave to them. And their eyes were opened, and they knew him: and he vanished out of their sight. And they said one to the other: Was not our heart burning within us, whilst he spoke in the way, and opened to us the scriptures? And rising up the same hour they went back to Jerusalem: and they found the eleven gathered together, and those that were with them, saying: The Lord is risen indeed, and hath appeared to Simon. And they told what things were done in the way: and how they knew him in the breaking of bread."

Of this beautiful and touching narrative St. Gregory the Great makes the following instructive application:—

"You have heard, beloved brethren, that our Lord appeared to two of His disciples, who were going to Emmaus, and who were talking and reasoning with themselves, but He did not reveal Himself to them. The Lord did outwardly before the eyes of their body, what inwardly passed before the eyes of their soul; for although they loved Him in their hearts, yet they doubted. The Lord however appeared to them outwardly, and would not let them know who He was. He showed them His presence while speaking of Him; but He concealed His identity from them in consequence of their doubts regarding Him. He conversed with them, and reproached them with their incredulity, expounding to them all in the Scriptures written concerning Him; but as He was a stranger



to their unbelieving hearts, He made as though He would go farther. It was necessary, however, that it should be seen whether they would protect Him as a stranger, whom they did not yet love as God. Those, however, with whom the eternal Truth walked, could not but have their hearts filled with love, and they invited Him, a stranger, to stay with them. But why do we say they invited Him, since it is written, they constrained Him? From this it is shown, that we should not only invite, but even urge strangers to stay with us. They prepare the table, they present to Him bread and food, and He, whom they knew not as their Lord and God, while expounding the Scriptures to them, they now recognized in the breaking of the bread. In merely hearing the divine teachings, therefore, their eyes were not opened, but by following them they were enlightened; for it is written: 'Not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified.' (Rom. 2 : 13.) He, therefore, who wishes to understand what he hears, should hasten to practice what he has heard. For behold, our Lord was not known while He was speaking, but He was known as soon as He was invited to eat."

According to the most celebrated Doctors of the Church, the "breaking of bread," performed by our Saviour before His disciples, and which manifested Him to them, was in fact the distribution of the Eucharist, in which the Lord gave to His disciples His sacred body as food, in the same manner as at the Last Supper. In other passages of the Holy Scriptures the dispensing of this most holy mystery is simply called the breaking of bread. (Acts 2 : 42.) From the effects of this breaking of bread we may justly conclude that it was not common bread, since it opened the eyes of the two disciples to know our Saviour. Therefore, St. Jerome remarks: "The Lord, by breaking bread, changed the house of Cleophas into a church." St. Augustine, with more clearness, says: "Consider, dearly beloved, how the Lord Jesus wished to be known at the breaking of bread by those whose eyes were held that they should not know Him. The faithful know what I wish to say—they discern Christ in the breaking of bread. For not every kind of bread becomes, or is changed, into the body of Christ, but the one only which is blessed by Christ. In the breaking of bread, therefore, they knew Him, and joyfully returned to the others, who had been already informed of the resurrection of the Lord, and to whom they related what they had seen."

From this it is evident that our Saviour administered the Holy Communion to His disciples under one kind and appearance only.

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## EASTER TUESDAY.

INTROIT OF THE MASS.—Eccclus. 15 : 3

“He gave them waters of wisdom to drink, alleluia. She shall be made strong in them, and shall not be moved, alleluia. And he shall exalt them forever, alleluia, alleluia. (Eccclus. 15 : 3.) “Give glory to the Lord, and call upon his name, declare his deeds among the Gentiles.” (Ps. 104 : 1.) Glory be to the Father.

In these prophetic words Sirach relates to us the fruits which we have obtained by the death and resurrection of the Son of God; the waters of heavenly wisdom, the fountain of living water, spoken of when conversing with the Samaritan woman, the fullness of the means of salvation, the Holy Sacraments instituted by Him in His Church, by which we become partakers of the fruits of His redemption and obtain eternal life.

## PRAYER.

O God, who dost ever multiply thy Church by a new progeny, grant to Thy servants, that they may retain in their lives, the mystery which they have received by faith. Through our Lord.

EPISTLE.—Acts 13 : 26-33.

In those days, Paul rising up, and with his hand bespeaking silence, said: Men, brethren, children of the stock of Abraham, and whosoever among you fear God, to you the word of this salvation is sent. For they that inhabited Jerusalem, and the rulers thereof, not knowing Jesus, nor the voices of the prophets, which are read every Sabbath, judging him have fulfilled them. And finding no cause of death in him, they desired of Pilate that they might kill him. And when they had fulfilled all things that were written of him, taking him down from the tree they laid him in a sepulchre. But God raised him up from the dead the third day: who was seen for many days by those who had come up together with him from Galilee to Jerusalem, who to this present are his witnesses to the people. And we declare unto you that the promise which was made to our fathers, this same God hath fulfilled to our children, raising up Jesus Christ our Lord.”

This passage of the Acts recounts to us how St. Paul preached the doctrine of Christ to the Jews of Antioch, appealing, as the Apostles generally did, principally to the resurrection of the Lord, as the fulfillment of all the prophecies, and as the most evident proof of His teachings. This sermon of the Apostle made a deep impression upon his hearers, so that they desired him and

Barnabas, who was with him, to speak again to them on the same subject on the following Sabbath. When on the next Sabbath nearly the whole city, though heathens, had assembled to hear the two Apostles, the Jews considering themselves to be the chosen people, and hating the heathens, were filled with envy. They contradicted those things which were said by Paul, and blasphemed him. Then Paul and Barnabas said boldly to this hard-hearted and unbelieving people: "To you it behoved us first to speak the word of God; but because you reject it and judge yourselves unworthy of eternal life, behold we turn to the gentiles. For so the Lord hath commanded us. I have set thee to be the light of the gentiles, that thou mayst be for salvation." (Isaias 49 : 6. Acts 13 : 46-47.)

But the gentiles who were present, hearing it, were glad, and glorified the word of the Lord; and many of them believed, so that the word of the Lord was published through the whole country.

GOSPEL.—Luke 24 : 36-47.

"At that time: Jesus stood in the midst of his disciples, and saith to them: Peace be to you; it is I, fear not. But they being troubled and frightened, supposed that they saw a spirit. And he said to them: Why are you troubled, and why do thoughts arise in your heads? See my hands and feet, that it is I myself; handle, and see: for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as you see me to have. And when he had said this, he showed them his hands and feet. But while they yet believed not, and wondered for joy, he said: Have you here any thing to eat? And they offered him a piece of a broiled fish and a honeycomb. And when he had eaten before them, taking the remains he gave to them. And he said to them: These are the words which I spoke to you while I was yet with you, that all things must needs be fulfilled, which are written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me. Then he opened their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures. And he said to them: Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise again from the dead the third day: and that penance and remission of sins should be preached in his name unto all nations."

The Gospel of to-day is the continuation of that of yesterday. Our Saviour, after having appeared to the two disciples on their way to Emmaus, appeared on the day of His resurrection to His Apostles. They with the exception of Thomas, were all assembled in the same house where our Saviour had eaten the Last Supper with them, and they had locked the doors for fear of the Jews; but Jesus suddenly appeared in His glorified body in their midst, passing through the closed doors. He greeted them according to the Jewish custom with the salutation of peace, which had at that time a different meaning, since he now



gave them by thus perfecting the work of redemption a three-fold peace: peace with God, peace with themselves, and peace with one another. On our Lord's passing through closed doors, St. Ambrose makes the following beautiful and instructive remark:—

“Wonderful! How could the body of the Lord pass through impenetrable matter and through closed doors? Invisible was His coming, visible His presence; His body was easy to touch, but difficult to comprehend; the disciples therefore were affrighted, and thought they beheld a spirit. By this the Lord wished to prove the truth of His resurrection; for He said to them: ‘See my hands and feet, that is myself, handle and see, for a spirit hath no flesh and bones, as you see me to have.’ The Lord therefore entered through the closed doors, not in unc corporeal nature, but in a body glorified through His resurrection. For whatever can be handled is undoubtedly a real body—whatever we touch and handle, is real matter. We shall also rise in a real body; for the animal body is sowed, and the spiritual body rises from the grave more refined and delicate than the body encumbered with the substance of earthly matter. How then could any one assert that it was not a real body which visibly possessed the sacred wounds shown by the Lord to His disciples, and which he even allowed them to touch?”

As the Apostles, although joyfully surprised and astonished, could not be convinced, Christ partook of food before their eyes, when all their doubts disappeared, and they at once believed in His resurrection

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## FIRST SUNDAY AFTER EASTER,

CALLED ALSO

## DOMINICA IN ALBIS, OR “LOW SUNDAY.”

THIS Sunday, one of the five principal Sundays of the whole Ecclesiastical Year, is called Low,—or as in German White-Sunday, because as mentioned on Holy-Saturday, in the earliest times of Christianity the Neophytes then laid aside the white garments which they had put on immediately after having received baptism, and which they wore until Low-Sunday. In reference to this usage St. Augustine addresses to Christians, but more especially to Neophytes the following excellent admonitions: “The solemnity of Easter ends with the feast of to-day, and therefore the garments of the Neophytes are changed to-day, but so that the white color of the garment which is laid aside, will be kept continually in their hearts. We should here observe, that because Easter is a time

of atonement and forgiveness, the solemnity of these holy days should be spent in such a manner, that while our bodies are relaxed, the purity of our hearts should not be disturbed, but rather, abstaining from luxury, drunkenness and excesses, we may give ourselves up to the moderate relaxation; in this way whatever we do not acquire by bodily abstinence we may attain by purity of mind. I speak to all who are under my spiritual direction, but as to-day the mysterious solemnity is concluded I address you principally, young scions of holiness, regenerated by water and the Holy Ghost, you tender scions, you new land of Christians, flowers of our honor, fruits of our labor, our joy and our crown; all you who remain steadfast in the Lord. To you I direct the Apostolic word: "The night is passed, and the day is at hand. Let us therefore cast off the works of darkness and put on the armor of light. Let us walk honestly as in the day, not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and impurities, not in contention and envy: But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ." (Rom. 13 : 12-14). "And we have," says St. Peter, "the more firm prophetic word, whereunto you do well to attend, as to a light that shineth in a dark place until the day dawn, and the day-star arise in your hearts." (2 Peter. 1 : 19.) "Let your loins be girt, and the lamps burning in your hands, and you yourselves like to men who wait for their Lord, when he shall return from the wedding." (Luke. 12 : 35-36). Behold the day will come when the Lord says: "A little while and you shall not see me, and again a little while and you shall see me. This is the hour of which he said: "You shall lament and weep, but the world shall rejoice," that is, this life full of temptation in which we wander away from Him. "But," so he continues, "I will see you again and your heart shall rejoice and your joy no man shall take from you." John. 16 : 16, 20, 22.)

INTROIT OF THE MASS.—1. Peter 2 : 2.

"As new-born babes, alleluia, desire the rational milk without guile, alleluia, alleluia, alleluia. Rejoice to God our helper; sing aloud to the God of Jacob. Glory be to the Father."

The Catholic Church most appropriately brings to our consideration this day the admonition, contained in the word of the Introit, and directed by St. Peter to those who were ready converted to the Christian belief.

PRAYER.

Grant, we beseech thee, Almighty God, that we who have performed the paschal solemnities, may, by Thy grace, preserve them in our life and conduct. Through our Lord.

EPISTLE.—1 John. 5 : 4-10.

"Dearly beloved: whatsoever is born of God, overcometh the world: and

this is the victory which overcometh the world, our faith. Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God? This is he that came by water and blood, Jesus Christ: not by water only, but by water and blood. And it is the Spirit which testifieth, that Christ is the truth. For there are three who give testimony in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost. And the three are one. And there are three that give testimony on earth: the spirit, and the water, and the blood, and these three are one. If we receive the testimony of men, the testimony of God is greater. For this is the testimony of God, which is greater, because He hath testified of His Son. He that believeth in the Son of God, hath the testimony of God in himself."

The Catholic Church, in view of the great mystery of the perfection of our redemption through the resurrection of our Lord, shows by these words of St. John, the great effects produced by the faith in Christ the Son of God, of those who were regenerated in holy baptism, by their success in overcoming the world, that is, the enemies of their salvation. Two principal means are mentioned, by which our Saviour accomplished the redemption of the world: WATER, that is, the institution of the holy baptism, in which we are cleansed from original sin, and BLOOD, that is, His death on the cross, by which He perfected the atoning sacrifice for the sins of the world. The SPIRIT, however, who testifies that Christ is the truth, is the same Holy Spirit, who after His ascension descended upon the Apostles, and in manifold ways testified to the truths of the doctrine of Christ. As in heaven, the three divine persons in indivisible and perfect harmony testify, that Christ as the Redeemer has really appeared upon earth, so is this great truth confirmed in the Church upon earth by three visible and harmonizing testimonies: by *the water* of holy baptism, by *THE BLOOD SACRIFICE* of our Saviour on the cross, and *BY THE EFFECT OF GRACE* produced by the Holy Ghost. If we believe the testimony of men, how much more should we credit the manifold and confirmed testimonies of God, believing confidently in Christ, the Son of God.

GOSPEL.—John 20: 19–31.

"At that time: When it was late that same day, the first of the week, and the doors were shut, where the disciples were gathered together for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in the midst, and said to them: Peace be to you. And when he had said this, he showed them his hands, and his side. The disciples therefore were glad, when they saw the Lord. He said therefore to them again: Peace be to you. As the Father hath sent me, I also send you. When he had said this, he breathed on them; and said to them: Receive ye the Holy Ghost. Whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven them: and whose sins you shall retain, they are retained. Now Thomas, one of the twelve, who is called Didymus, was not with them when Jesus came. The other disciples



therefore said to him: We have seen the Lord. But he said to them: Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the place of the nails, and put my hand into his side, I will not believe. And after eight days again his disciples were within, and Thomas with them. Jesus cometh, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said: Peace be to you. Then he saith to Thomas: Put in thy finger hither, and see my hands; and bring hither thy hand, and put it into my side: and be not faithless but believing. Thomas answered, and saith to him: My Lord, and my God. Jesus saith to him: Because thou hast seen me, Thomas, thou hast believed: Blessed are they that have not seen, and have believed. Many other signs also did Jesus in the sight of his disciples, which are not written in this book. But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ the Son of God: and that believing, you may have life after his name."

The first appearance of our Lord to His Apostles, when Thomas was not present, has been related in the Gospel of Easter-Tuesday. St. John in the Gospel of to-day speaks of a very important act, which Jesus Christ on this occasion performed, that is, the INSTITUTION OF THE HOLY SACRAMENT OF Penance.

The whole conduct of our Saviour on this occasion evidently shows that He intended to perform a solemn and important act. After having repeatedly given His peace to the disciples, so that they should become the bearers as it were, the mediators and dispensers of that peace which by Him had been restored to mankind, He says to them: "As the Father hath sent me, I also send you;" that is, the same mission which the Father has given me, I give you; the same work of teaching, of reconciling, and of sanctifying men, which I have performed, you also shall accomplish in the whole world, and among all nations. After these words HE BREATHED ON THEM, for as God the Father in creating the body of the first man, formed of dust, breathed into it an immortal soul; so in a similar manner should the disciples by the breath of the Son of God, be created anew. (2 Cor. 5: 17). He then said to them: "RECEIVE YE THE HOLY GHOST." By these words is not meant the wonderful communication of the Holy Ghost, which our Saviour even before his death had promised to His disciples, and who, in the fullness of His graces and gifts, descended upon them at Pentecost but a mysterious and endured communication, by virtue of which they should possess the power of binding and loosing, of forgiving and of retaining sins. And now He Himself imparts to them in definite and clear words this wonderful power, He institutes in His Church this means of salvation, this holy Sacrament, in which the pastors of the Church, the Bishops and the priests forgive the sins of those who confess them in sorrow and contrition, or retain the sins of those who are not sufficiently prepared or who are unworthy of receiving absolution; for from the fact that this power of forgiving or retaining sins, given by our Sa-

viour to His Apostles descended to their legitimate successors in office, the Bishops and the priests, it follows, that the Church of Christ will continue to exist until the end of the world, and that the means of salvation deposited in her must therefore be of the same duration. That the verbal and accurate confession of at least the most grievous sins and their accompanying circumstances is necessary on the part of the sinner, follows evidently from the twofold power given by Christ to His Apostles: to forgive or retain sins, since the Apostles and their successors could not without an accurate knowledge of the state of the soul of each sinner be capable of judging whether they could give absolution to the sinner or must defer it at least for a time, until the sinner was better prepared. We find, therefore, according to the testimony of the most celebrated Doctors of the Church, that the holy Sacrament of Penance in conformity with the provisions of Christ can only be administered in the following manner: The faithful must confess their sins, at least the most grievous, either publicly, as was done in the early times of Christianity, or else secretly to the priest, as if to God Himself, and only then receive absolution, if they are found worthy of it. In reference to this St. Jerome says: "By two Sacraments, principally, is the blood of Christ applied to us; by baptism and by penance, which latter is sometimes called the second baptism." In regard to confession the same holy Doctor says: "If the infernal serpent should poison any one by a deadly sting and the unhappy victim should conceal his wound, the master possessing the power of healing would be of as little use to him, as is the physician to the sick man who out of shame will not reveal the nature of his disease." In the same sense St. Augustine says: "Be not deceived by the words of those who would persuade you that a confession to God alone and not to the priest can save you. We by no means deny that we must accuse ourselves often before God, but at the same time we say to you only what the pure doctrine teaches: that you are nevertheless in need of the salutary counsel of the priest, in order that he may be a mediator between you and God."

The Catholic Church, therefore, expressed herself clearly in regard to this important subject at the last general council of Trent (held in the years 1545—1563.): "If any say, that the Sacrament of penance in the Catholic Church is not a true and real Sacrament instituted by our Saviour, so that the faithful may reconcile themselves with God, as often as they have fallen into sin after baptism, let him be anathema.—If any say, that according to divine law it is not necessary in order to obtain forgiveness, to confess all and every mortal sin which we remember after a careful examination of our conscience, to confess secret sins and sins committed against the last two commandments of God, and the circumstances that would change the character of sin, and that confession is not only instituted for the instruction and consolation of the penitent, let him be anathema." (Sess. 14. 1. and 7. Canon).

At the other apparition of our Lord, which according to the Gospel of to-

day took place eight days later, Thomas also was present, and he the unbelieving one, who would not give credence to what the other disciples had told him of the resurrection of Christ, believed at last the undeniable fact, which he beheld with his own eyes and handled with his own hands. Filled with agreeable surprise—but at the same time overcome with a holy awe, he could only utter the words, “My Lord and my God!” thus loudly and explicitly confessing his belief in the divinity of Christ, which he would not at first acknowledge.

“He saw and touched the man,” remarks St. Augustine, “and confessed God, whom he did not see or touch. By what he saw and touched he undoubtedly believed in what he could not see or touch.”

By the words of our Lord: “Blessed are they that have not seen and have believed,” are denoted, as St. Gregory the Great remarks, the faithful of later times, who without having seen the Redeemer in the flesh, still believe in Him with a willing heart, who receive and practice all His teaching in humble obedience.

The same holy Father adds the following instructive remarks: “Did it happen by mere chance, think you that Thomas the chosen disciple was not present, but afterwards came and heard of the resurrection of the Lord, but having doubted, doubting touched, and touching believed? Not by mere chance did this happen but by God’s wise providence. The mercy of God arranged it so, that the doubting disciple in touching the wounds of his Master healed in us the wounds of unbelief; for the unbelief of Thomas confirmed our faith more than the belief of the other disciples.

The concluding words of this day’s Gospel: “Many other signs also did Jesus in the sight of His disciples which are not written in this book,” especially if we add another passage of the same Evangelist where he says: “But there are also many other things which Jesus did, which if they were written every one, the world itself, I think, would not be able to contain the books that should be written,”—(John 21: 25.)—are an important evidence for the truth of what the Church declares, (see: 1 Cor. 11: 34; Galat. 1: 8. 9; 2 Tim. 2: 2; 2 Thess. 2: 14; 2 John 12; 3 John 13.) that the Holy Scriptures are not the only depository of Christian doctrine, but that we must also admit TRADITION as a source of Catholic dogmas. There are some points which are accepted even by Protestants (who reject tradition), as for instance the validity of infant-baptism, the abolishing of the Jewish Sabbath and the obligation to sanctify Sunday, the abolishing of the precept not to eat the flesh of strangled animals and the blood thereof, all of which are proved by tradition only, not by the Holy Scriptures.

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## SECOND SUNDAY AFTER EASTER.

CALLED ALSO

## SUNDAY "MISERICORDIA DOMINI."

INTROIT OF THE MASS.—Ps. 22.

"The earth is full of the mercy of the Lord, alleluia. By the word of the Lord the heavens were established, alleluia, alleluia. Rejoice in the Lord, ye just; praise becometh the upright. Glory be to the Father."

These words, in which the royal Psalmist joyfully praises the omnipotence, wisdom, and benevolence of God, are set before us by the Catholic Church to lead us continually to praise and glorify with grateful hearts Him, who by the death and resurrection of His only begotten Son showed in such a wonderful manner His infinite love and mercy to man. The Church, therefore, commences the Mass, as will be seen hereafter, on all the Sundays during the Easter-season with similar praises to God, that the faithful during this holy season may join in the exultations with which the Church celebrates the glorious victory of her heavenly bridegroom.

PRAYER.

O God, who by the humility of Thy Son hast raised up a fallen world, grant to Thy faithful everlasting joy, that those whom Thou hast delivered from the evils of eternal death, Thou mayest make to enjoy everlasting happiness. Through the same Lord.

EPISTLE.—1 Pet. ii. 21-25.

"Dearly beloved: Christ suffered for us, leaving you an example that you should follow his steps. Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth. Who, when he was reviled, did not revile: when he suffered, he threatened not: but delivered himself to him that judged him unjustly. Who his own self bore our sins in his body upon the tree: that we being dead to sins, should live to justice: by whose stripes you were healed. For you were as sheep going astray: but you are now converted to the shepherd and bishop of your souls."

Most appropriately is this passage from the first epistle of St. Peter placed before us. The Apostle here proves to the faithful that Christ suffered death on the cross willingly and out of love to men, His brethren, so that all may imitate His patience in suffering, what could incite us more to patient endurance of the greatest sufferings and adversities, than the example of Jesus, the Son of God, who took upon Himself and underwent the greatest and most painful sufferings that had ever been borne by any one, innocently, not for His own sake

but for others, not by force, ut willingly, not murmuring and lamenting but patiently and in obedience to the will of His heavenly Father? As we, therefore, have been saved by the sufferings of Christ from sin and eternal punishment, as we have been healed by His wounds, and reconciled with our heavenly Father by His great sacrifice upon the cross, so should we, redeemed by the blood of Christ, as brethren and co-heirs of Him who died on the cross, as members of the Head crowned with thorns, follow His steps, imitate His example, walk with Him the way of the cross and thus become equal to Him.

The words of the Apostle in this day's Epistle, in which he says that we were like sheep going astray, but were now converted to the Shepherd and Bishop of our souls—refers especially to the parable spoken by our Lord in the Gospel of to-day, in which he calls himself the good Shepherd.

GOSPEL.—John 10 : 11-16.

“At that time Jesus said to the Pharisees: I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd giveth his life for his sheep. But the hireling and he that is not the shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, seeth the wolf coming and leaveth the sheep, and flieth: and the wolf catcheth and scattereth the sheep: and the hireling flieth, because he is a hireling: and he hath no care for the sheep. I am the good shepherd: and I know mine, and mine know me. As the Father knoweth me, and I know the Father; and I lay down my life for my sheep. And other sheep I have, that are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice, and there shall be one fold and one shepherd.”

The Gospel of to-day contains one of the most beautiful parables ever spoken by our divine Saviour. In the most touching manner He expresses His infinite love for men, to save whom He would willingly give His life, and the Catholic Church, in placing this parable before us, very properly reminds us of the perfection of the redemption, purchased by the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Our Saviour in this parable calls Himself the GOOD SHEPHERD, who knows His sheep, protects them from the wolves and even lays down His life for them. Not only herdsmen, but superior and governor of nations, kings and princes, teachers and priests, and even the Almighty Himself have always in a spiritual sense been called SHEPHERDS. (Compare 3 Kings 22: 17; Jerem. 10: 21; 25: 34; Zack. 10: 3; Isaias 56: 11; Jerem. 2: 8; 3: 15; Ephes 4: 11; Rom. 12: 7; Gen. 49: 24; Ps. 22: 1; Isaias 40: 11; Ezek. 34: 11. 12.)

The prophets announced our Saviour under this type. Thus Isaias the prophet says: “He shall feed his flock like a shepherd; he shall gather together the lambs with his arm and shall take them up in his bosom, and he himself shall carry them that are with young.” (Isaias 40: 11.) In the same manner the Lord speaks through Ezekiel the prophet, after a severe reproach

to the wicked shepherds of the people: "I will feed my sheep and I will cause them to lie down, saith the Lord God. I will seek that which was lost, and that which was driven away I will bring again; and I will bind up that which was broken, and I will strengthen that which was weak, and that which was fat and strong I will preserve, and I will feed them in judgment. And I will set up one shepherd over them, and he shall feed them, even my servant David (that is the descendant of David, Jesus Christ, who in the new law should in a spiritual manner restore the kingdom of David,) he shall feed them, and he shall be their shepherd." (Ezek. 34: 15. 16. 23; Ezek. 37: 24.) The most important types of our Saviour in the old law have also been shepherds. Abel, the first just man, who was innocently killed by his brother, was a shepherd, and offered up to God the firstlings of his flock. (Gen. 4: 2. 4.) The three great Patriarchs Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, as also the sons of Jacob (among them Joseph, the most beautiful type of Christ) had been shepherds. Moses, the leader of the Israelites and the great law-giver of the Old Testament was also a shepherd, and while watching his flock on Mount Horeb, was called by the Lord in the burning bush to free his people. (Exod. 3.) Even king David (the ancestor of Christ according to the flesh, and also a type of the great King of the new law) in his youth watched his father's flocks, and as a shepherd boy was called away from his flock to be anointed by Samuel King of Israel. (1 Kings 16.)

All of the prophecies of the old law have been fulfilled by our Saviour according to His own words: He appeared as the Good Shepherd of all the nations upon earth, he endeavored to feed His sheep, to nourish them with His heavenly doctrine, and to protect them from the snares of their spiritual enemies; He even gave His life for them on the cross, suffering the greatest pains. He became as it were Himself the Paschal lamb, so as to save by His death, His sheep from eternal death, and as a pledge of His continued love even after His death; He has left them His own flesh and blood, to receive in the Holy Eucharist as the most nourishing food of their souls. St. Chrysostom discourses beautifully on this parable of Christ as the Good Shepherd. Drawing the distinction between Christ, the Good Shepherd and the wicked shepherds of the Israelites; he says: "Ezekiel the prophet has foretold: Wo to the shepherds of Israel, that feed themselves! Should not the flocks be fed by the shepherds? That which was driven away, they brought not back, neither have they sought that which was lost, that which was broken they have not bound up, they have not fed the flocks, but themselves." (Ezek. 34: 2. 4. 8.) St. Paul expresses the same in a different manner: "For all seek the things that are their own, not the thing that are Jesus Christ's." (Philipp. 2: 21.) Christ on the other hand proves how different He is from those, who only ruin others by saying that He is come to give them life; how different too from those who are reckless whether the wolves devour their sheep, by saying that He was willing to give His life



for His sheep, they may not perish. For although the Jews attempted His life, He continued to teach, He did not give up those, who believed in Him, but He continued His work and even suffereth death."

On the distinction between a hireling and a good shepherd, as expressed by our Saviour, St. Gregory the Great makes the following remark: "Not a shepherd but a hireling is he called who does not feed the flocks of the Lord out of fervent love, but on account of temporal gain. A hireling is he, who although occupying the place of a shepherd does not endeavor to win souls, but who desires earthly advantages, delights in possessing honors and distinction, enriches himself with temporal emoluments and feels happy when the people show him reverence; for this is the reward of the hireling, so that for his official labors he finds what he seeks, but he will be excluded hereafter from the inheritance of the flock."

By the wolf, which catcheth and scattereth the sheep is understood every seducer, every one who gives scandal, and every wicked man who tries to corrupt the faithful by word or writing, by bad example or counsel and provocation to sin and every one who attempts to destroy their souls. St. Gregory says: "The devil also is the wolf, who catches the sheep by inciting one to intemperance, another to avarice, one to pride, another to anger, tormenting one by envy and inducing another to commit fraud. The devil therefore like a wolf scatters the sheep and kills spiritually the faithful people by temptation. The hireling opposes these evils neither by his zeal for the welfare of souls, nor by his ardent love for them, as he seeks only the outward comfort of his sheep, so with indifference does he suffer the inward losses of the flock."

Very important are the words of our Saviour: "I know mine and mine know me." He means to say, that as He the Good Shepherd knows His own, loves and feeds them, and desires to save them from ruin by giving up His own life for them, so also should His own people know love, and venerate Him as their Good Shepherd, their Saviour, and would faithfully follow His directions and carefully avoid the temptations of ravening wolves, in order to remain always among the number of the elect. In reference to this St. Augustine says: "The sheep hear the voice of the Shepherd, and he calls them by name; for He has written their names in the book of life. Therefore the Apostle says: The Lord knoweth who are His;" (2 Tim. 2: 19.) for who else could call the sheep by their names and lead them to eternal life, but He who knows the names of the elect? He therefore says to His disciple: Rejoice that your names are written in heaven! (Luke 10: 20.) And who else preceded them that they might follow Him, but He, who rising again from the dead, dieth now no more, death shall no more have dominion over him, (Rom. 6: 9.) and He, who when walking in the flesh said: Father, I will that where I am, they also whom thou hast given me may be with me. (John 17: 24.) In the same sense He also says: I am the door. By me if any man enter in, he shall be saved;

and I am come that they may have life, (John 10 : 9. 10.) that is true faith that worketh by charity, (Sal. 5 : 6.) through which faith they enter into the fold, that they may live, because the just man liveth by faith, (Gal. 3 : 11.) and that those may have life abundantly, who persevere unto the end, and enter through the door, that is through the belief in Christ, and arrive where the Shepherd has preceded them, where they never die, where they are fed, and those who hunger and thirst after justice are filled." (Matt. 5 : 6.)

By "FOLD" our Saviour intends the Church, that great institution upon earth—into which He would bring all men to save them. Among the first were the "lost sheep of the house of Israel;" (Matt. 15 : 24.) but then the other sheep, not belonging to the house of Israel, were the Gentiles, spread over the whole world, and to call whom He send His Apostles as shepherds and teachers of the nations. Our Saviour's promise, "There shall be one fold and one shepherd,"—is not to be understood as if ALL men without exception would become members of the true Church; for according to the teachings of divine revelation, (2 Thess. 2 : 2-4; Apoc. 19 : 19-21.) even in the last days of the world there will exist many adherents to the prince of darkness; but these words of the Lord refer to the ONE CHURCH founded by Him, and to the legitimate superiors appointed by Him in His Church, in whose communion alone is truth and salvation, and out of which there is no salvation.

The proposition: "*extra ecclesiam nulla salus*," that is, out of the Church there is no salvation, which St. Cyprian, Bishop of Carthage, the great Doctor and Martyr of the Church has expressed in the above language, and which the Catholic Church has always maintained as an article of faith, has been often misunderstood by the opponents of the Church, and the Church has been very unjustly reproached, as if by this dogma she would deny the possibility of salvation to all who do not belong to her outwardly, and who do not openly confess their belief in her. This dogma, however, is proved by the words of our Saviour Himself, and when rightly understood cannot be offensive to reasonable thinkers. The meaning of this proposition or dogma is, that Jesus Christ has instituted only one true and legitimate Church, and confided to her those means of grace, by the right use of which every one can safely work out his own salvation, and that under pain of eternal damnation, He has commanded all to obey her and to belong to her; that it is therefore necessary for all (so far as the possibility exists of such outward communion,) to enter into the Church, and scrupulously to use her means of peace of grace, since, according to the words of Christ Himself, he who will not hear the Church, is to be considered as a heathen and publican. (Matt. 18 : 17.)

This proposition, that there can be but one Church, possessing in itself all the means necessary for obtaining eternal salvation, and that no sect, separated from the Catholic Church can be considered as possessing these means, has been defended with the greatest firmness against the attacks of heretics by all the

Holy Fathers of the Church. Thus writes St. Ignatius, a disciple of the Apostles, to the Christians of Philadelphia: "I confide in you, that you in the Lord will be of no other mind; I write therefore with confidence in your love to God, and beseech you, to remain of one faith, of one doctrine, using one and the same thanksgiving; for there is ONE flesh and ONE blood of the Lord, which has been given for us; in the same manner there is only ONE bread, which is broken for all, ONE chalice of the Holy Church, ONE Bishop together with all the priests and deacons, my co-servants, because there is only ONE God the Father, ONE only-begotten-Son of God, the Word made Man, and ONE Comforter, the Spirit of truth, and ONE doctrine, ONE faith, ONE baptism, (Ephes. 4: 3 etc.) and ONE Church propagated by the blessed Apostles from one end of the world to the other in the blood of Jesus Christ, and with their own sweat and labor. You all must be perfected as the chosen generation, the kingly priesthood, the holy nation (1 Peter 2: 9.) into a unity with Christ.....Avoid therefore as children of light the division of unity and the wicked doctrines of heretics, by whom darkness shall spread all over the earth. Where the Shepherd is, there the sheep should gather; for many wolves in sheeps clothing (Matt. 7: 15.) seek to devour in capturing those who hasten to the Lord; but in your truth they find no place. Be guarded, therefore, against wicked words, which Christ has not sown, but the adversary who destroys man; they are not sown by the Father, but by the devil. I write this, not as if I found schism among you, but to confirm you as children of God."

In the same sense St. Cyprian, Bishop and Martyr, says: "Whosoever denies the Church of Christ, can not be called a confessor of Christ; for St. Paul says: For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and they shall be two in one flesh; this is a great sacrament, but I speak in Christ and in the Church; (Ephes. 5: 31. 32.) I repeat, that when the holy Apostle says this and testifies with his sacred voice, that Christ and His Church are united by indissoluble bands, how can he be with Christ, who is not with the spouse of Christ, and in His Church?" In another place he says: "There is only one Church which increases into many congregations by means of her fertility; she preserves us for God, she shows the kingdom to the children whom she has brought forth for Christ. Whoever leaves the Church, and unites himself with an adulteress, (that is with a sect opposed to the true Church) shall be separated from the promises of the Church. He also belongs not to the servants of Christ, who leaves the Church of Christ; he is a stranger, an impious man, an enemy, he can not have God for his Father who has not the Church for his Mother, and if he was lost who was not in the ark of Noah, so also will he be lost who is not in the Church of Christ."

St. Jerome expresses the same doctrines in his letter to the Pope Damasus; he says: "By not following any one but Christ, I live in communion with your Holiness, that is, with the chair of St. Peter; I know that upon that rock



the Church has been built. (Matt. 16: 18.) Whoever eats of the lamb outside of that house, is unhallowed; whoever is not in the ark of Noah, will perish in the deluge." On another occasion the same Holy Father says: "We must remain in the Church which has been founded by the Apostles and which continues unto these days. If you should hear those called Christians, who are Marcionites, Valentinians, Montensians or Compater (names of different sects) know then, that it is not to the Church of Christ that they belong, but to the synagogue of Antichrist. They are those of whom the Apostle says, that they would come." (2 Tim. 3.)

Not less precise and clear are the words of St. Augustine on this point, he says: "We must not seek religion in the confusion of the Gentiles, nor in the weakness of heretics, nor in the blindness of the Jews, but among those who inviolably keep and follow the true doctrine. We must believe in the Catholic Religion and live in communion with that Church which is called and is the Catholic Church, not only by her own children, but also by her enemies; for even heretics and schismatics give her the title of "Catholic," not only when conversing among themselves, but even when speaking to strangers; for they would not be understood, did they not call her by this name; by this name does the whole world know her." And in another passage this great Doctor of the Church says: "How many belong to the body of Christ! No one can be just his claim as long as he is separated from the unity of this body; for as a member separated from the body of a living man, can not retain the spirit of life, so also members separated from the body of Christ the Just, can in no way keep the spirit of justice.—For the ONE bread is a mystery of unity, as the Apostle says: For we being many are one bread, one body, all that partake of one bread. (1 Cor. 10: 17.) Therefore the Catholic Church alone is the body of Christ, and He is the Saviour of His body. (Ephes. 5: 23.) No one receives life from the Holy Ghost, separated from this body, for as the Apostle himself says: the charity of God is poured forth in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, who is given to us. (Rom. 5: 5.) He, however, shall not partake of the divine love of Christ who is an enemy to unity. Whoever, therefore, wishes to receive the Holy Ghost should be careful not to remain out of the Church."

In regard to the fate of those who do not even outwardly belong to her fold, the Catholic Church is far from being uncharitable in her decisions, nor does she deny to them the possibility of obtaining heaven. The Church has never pronounced the sentence of damnation upon any one, nor has she denied eternal happiness to any one; all such decisions she leaves to God, who alone knows every man as he really is. All that the Church holds in reference to this point, in conformity with the express doctrine of the holy Scriptures is, that every one to whom the possibility is offered is obliged to follow the truth; and that those who, *through their own fault*, out of pride, malice, indifference, or from any other insufficient reason, will not receive the truth, can not obtain eternal

happiness from which they cut themselves off. We can not say, nor does the Church, that either this or that person lives in error through his own fault, and that he will be damned. All who do not outwardly belong to the Catholic Church, yet live in ignorance of their error—and how great is the number of such—are not only not condemned by the Church, but, on the contrary, if they seek honestly after the truth and express a sincere wish to renounce their error, and to follow the truth as soon as they know it, are considered by the Church as belonging to her fold; for the Church has only excommunicated those who intentionally and willingly persevere in their error and close their hearts against the truth. In reference to this, St. Augustine says:

“Not even those whose errors are most destructive, if they do not pertinaciously defend them. This mercy should be shown to those who have become entangled in errors, not from any fault of their own, but only through the misfortune of their parents, who have been led astray, but who desire to find the truth, and are ready to embrace it as soon as they know it.”

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### THIRD SUNDAY AFTER EASTER,

CALLED ALSO

### SUNDAY “JUBILATE.”

INTROIT OF THE MASS.—Ps. 64.

“Shout with glory to God, all the earth, alleluia. Sing ye a psalm to his name, alleluia! Give glory to his praise, alleluia! alleluia! alleluia! Say unto God how terrible are thy works, O Lord. In the multitude of thy strength, thy enemies shall lie to thee in vain.”

The Church expresses in these words her joy over the resurrection of our Lord, inciting all her children to praise Him, who thereby, to the terror and confusion of His enemies, has so clearly proved His omnipotence.

PRAYER.

O God, who dost show to those that go astray the light of Thy truth, that they may return to the way of justice, grant to all those who are numbered in the profession of Christianity, to reject those things that are inimical to this name, and to pursue those which are becoming. Through Christ.

## EPISTLE.—1 Peter 2: 11-19.

“Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, to refrain yourselves from carnal desires which war against the soul, having your conversation good among the Gentiles: that whereas they speak against you as evil-doers, they may, by the good works which they shall behold in you, glorify God in the day of visitation. Be ye subject therefore to every human creature for God's sake: whether it be to the king as excelling: or to governors as sent by him for the punishment of evil-doers, and for the praise of the good: for so is the will of God, that by doing well you may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men: as free, and not as making liberty a cloak for malice, but as the servants of God. Honor all men. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the king. Servants, be subject to your masters with all fear, not only to the good and gentle, but also to the froward. For this is thanks-worthy, in Christ Jesus, our Lord.”

In accordance with the words of our Saviour in this day's Gospel, where He speaks of the little while, that is the vanity of all earthly things, the Church in the Epistle of to-day calls our attention to the words of St. Peter, in which he says that we are nothing but strangers and pilgrims upon earth, and according to St. Paul: “That we have not here a lasting city, but we seek one that is to come.” (Hebr. 13: 14.) We should, therefore, as those redeemed by the blood of Christ, the pure and undefiled Lamb, as the chosen people, refrain from all sinful and wicked desires, by which we endanger our souls, and we should confess our faith by a good holy life, endeavoring thereby to induce even the enemies of our holy religion to respect it, as well as its founder, our Lord and Saviour. The Church admonishes us in the words of the Apostle to practice as faithful Christians and servants of God, those obligations towards the temporal rulers placed over us by God which are so often violated by men. Even if our rulers should be cruel in their treatment towards us, we should remember that the fulfilment of our duties becomes more meritorious if it costs us hardship and sacrifice.

## GOSPEL.—John 16: 16-22.

“At that time Jesus said to his disciples: A little while, and now you shall not see me: and again a little while, and you shall see me: because I go to the Father. Then some of his disciples said one to another: What is this that he saith to us: A little while, and you shall not see me: and again a little while, and you shall see me, and because I go to the Father? They said therefore: What is this that he saith, a little while? we know not what he speaketh. And Jesus knew that they had a mind to ask him; and he said to them: Of this do you inquire among yourselves, because I said: A little while, and you shall not see me: and again a little while, and you shall see me! Amen, amen, I say to you, that you shall lament and weep, but the world shall rejoice: and you shall



be made sorrowful, but your sorrow shall be turned into joy. A woman, when she is in labor, hath sorrow, because her hour is come: but when she hath brought forth the child, she remembereth no more the anguish, for joy that a man is born into the world. So also you now indeed have sorrow, but I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice; and your joy no man shall take from you."

The Gospel of to-day contains a beautiful discourse, delivered by our Lord to His disciples after the Last Supper, and immediately before His Passion, in which He endeavors by the strongest arguments to quiet and console them in relation to His approaching return to His heavenly Father, and for this reason it is called the farewell or last discourse of our Saviour. In the following Sundays until Pentecost, parts of this last discourse of Christ are very appropriately proposed for our meditation, since this entire holy season is devoted to the commemoration of the last days of our Lord upon earth before His ascension, and before the descent of the Holy Ghost, which followed soon after.

The words of our Saviour, that the disciples in a little while should not see Him, and again in a little while should see Him, refer first to His approaching death, when they should see Him no more, and to His resurrection, when they should again see Him; they refer also to His ascension, when He would be really taken from them, and also to their reception into heaven which He had shortly before promised them, where they would again see Him with the eyes of their spirit.

To this prediction our Saviour adds words of consolation for His disciples, who were saddened by the announcement of the approaching separation from their beloved Master. He told them that they would have to suffer many afflictions and sorrows from their adversaries, and that they would lament and weep, but that the world would rejoice, that is the enemies of God, and that His doctrine would triumph even amid the prosecutions inflicted upon the Church and the faithful. These afflictions, however, would last only a little while; for after having finished their combat upon earth, they would rejoice for ever in heaven, in seeing and possessing Him, who would give them ample compensation in their never-ending joy for the affliction and sorrow they had suffered in their life upon earth.

A beautiful and instructive exhortation on the above is given to us by St. Augustine, who says: "A little while is the whole space through which this present world passes. Therefore the same Evangelist says in his Epistle: It is the last hour. (1 John 2: 18.) And the Lord also adds: Because I go to the Father—which expression has reference to the former words: A little while, and you shall not see me—but not to the following: And again a little while, and you shall see me: for by His going to the Father, they were not to see Him, and it was not said, because He was to die, and would until His resurrection be re-

moved from their sight, but because He was to return to His Father, which He really did, by ascending into heaven after His resurrection, and after having spent forty days with them. The words: 'Yet a little while, and you shall not see me,' refer to those who in that time saw Him in His body, because He was going to the Father, when they would not see Him in His mortal body, which they saw when He was speaking to them. The following words, however: 'And again a little while, and you shall see me,' contained a promise made to the whole Church similar to the declaration: 'Behold, I am with you all days even to the consummation of the world.' (Matt. 28 : 20.)

"The Lord, however, delays not with His promise; yet a little while and we shall see Him, when we shall have no more to ask of Him, because there will remain nothing to ask for, and all things will be made manifest to us, while time yet continues; but as soon as it is passed away, we shall then see that it was indeed only a little while. Our joy will not be like that of the world, of which it is said: 'The world shall rejoice;' but while longing after future happiness, we should not be without present joy, according to the words of the Apostle: Rejoicing in hope, patient in tribulation, (Rom. 12 : 12.) like a woman who when her labor is passed, remembers no more the pain, for joy that a man is born into the world.

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## THE PATRONAGE OF ST. JOSEPH.

On this Sunday the Catholic Church celebrates the patronage of St. Joseph. ST. JOSEPH, having been chosen by Almighty God to be the foster-father of and therefore the protector of His only-begotten Son, and at the same time protector of the Blessed Virgin, it naturally follows that the faithful, while venerating this just man and faithful servant of God, should recommend themselves to his special protection. St. Teresa, the great reformer of the Carmelite order, had great devotion to this Saint; she had chosen him for her special patron, and endeavored to increase the veneration for him among the members of her order, and all others. In her biography, she expresses herself most beautifully on this point: "I have chosen St. Joseph for my patron, and my intercessor; I have recommended myself most earnestly to him, and have always found that he has on this, and on other occasions, when I was in danger of losing my honor and salvation, afforded me greater and more speedy assistance through the

power of his intercession, than I even would have dared to hope for. I do not remember that I have, until the present hour, ever asked him for any thing which I have not received; and I can not think without astonishment of the graces which God has granted me through his intercession, and of the dangers of body and soul, from which he has saved me. It seems that God has given grace to other Saints to assist us at certain times, but I know from experience, that St. Joseph assists us in all necessities, just as if our Lord desired to show us that He could not deny any thing to His foster-father, to whom He was subject while living upon earth. Other persons whom I have advised to recommend themselves to St. Joseph, have had the same good fortune. Many Christians have a great devotion to him, and I perceive daily more and more the truth of my assertion. St. Joseph is especially invoked to obtain through his intercession, the grace of a happy death, since he himself died in the presence of the two most holy persons that ever lived upon earth, Jesus and Mary.

INTROIT OF THE MASS.—Ps. 32.

“The Lord is our helper and protector, in him our heart shall rejoice, and in his holy name we have trusted. Alleluia, alleluia. Give ear, O thou that rulest in Israel, thou that leadest Joseph like a sheep. Glory be to the Father.”

In these words of the Psalmist, who particularly mentions Joseph, the beloved son of Jacob, the Catholic Church prays with firm confidence to God, to lead and protect the faithful, as the children of Abraham in the new law, on account of the merits of His glorious servant St. Joseph, and through his intercession.

PRAYER.

O God, who by an unspeakable providence wast pleased to choose Blessed Joseph for the spouse of Thy Most Holy Mother, grant, we beseech Thee, that we may deserve to have Him for our intercessor in heaven whom we venerate as our protector upon earth. Who livest.

EPISTLE.—Gen. 49 : 22-26.

“Joseph is a growing son, a growing son and comely to behold: the daughters run to and fro upon the wall. But they that held darts provoked him, and quarrelled with him, and envied him. His bow rested upon the strong, and the bands of his arms and his hands were loosed, by the hands of the mighty one of Jacob: thence he came forth a pastor, the stone of Israel. The God of thy father shall be thy helper, and the Almighty shall bless thee with the blessings of heaven above, with the blessings of the deep that lieth beneath, with the blessings of the breasts and of the womb. The blessings of thy father are strengthened with the blessings of his fathers: until the desire of the everlasting



hills should come ; may they be upon the head of Joseph, and upon the crown of the Nazarite among his brethren."

The Church applies to St. Joseph, of whom Joseph in the old law was a most appropriate type, these words containing not only the blessing given by the dying patriarch Jacob to his beloved son Joseph, but also a prophecy in regard to the great blessings which would be bestowed upon us by the promised Saviour. St. Bernard beautifully compares the two chosen servants of God, the Egyptian Joseph, and Joseph the foster-father of our Saviour, as being much alike in respect to their virtues, their vocation, and their lives. He says : " In speaking of St. Joseph the foster-father of Christ, remember the great Patriarch who was sold by his brethren into Egypt, and know, that he not only received his name, but that he also attained his purity, and became partaker of his innocence and dignity. For as Joseph the patriarch, who was sold into Egypt through the envy of his brethren, was the type of Christ sold by Judas, in the same manner Joseph, the foster-father, fleeing from the persecution of Herod, carried Jesus into Egypt. The first, who faithfully served his king, would not sin with the wife of his master ; the latter faithfully protected with his own continency, his spouse, the mother of his Lord, knowing her to be a virgin.

The first Joseph possessed the knowledge of the mysteries of dreams—to the latter was given the knowledge and participation in divine mysteries. The first saved the corn, not only for himself, but also for the whole nation ;—to the latter was given the Bread of Heaven, that he might keep and preserve it for himself, and for the whole world. There is no doubt but that Joseph, to whom was confided the Mother of our Lord, was a just and faithful man. Indeed he was a prudent and faithful servant, whom the Lord had destined to be the protector of His mother, the supporter of his flesh, and the only assistant of His great counsels upon earth."

GOSPEL.—Luke 3: 21-23.

"At that time: It came to pass when all the people was baptized, that Jesus also being baptized and praying, heaven was opened: and the Holy Ghost descended in a bodily shape as a dove upon him: and a voice came from heaven: Thou art my beloved Son, in thee I am well pleased. And Jesus himself was beginning about the age of thirty years, being (as it was supposed) the son of Joseph."

For the explanation of this Gospel see the Octave of Epiphany, in which is contained the Gospel of to-day.

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## FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER EASTER.

CALLED ALSO

## CANTATE SUNDAY.

INTROIT OF THE MASS.—Ps. 97.

“SING ye to the Lord a new song, alleluia, for the Lord hath done wonderful things, alleluia. He hath revealed his justice in the sight of the Gentiles, alleluia, alleluia. His right hand had wrought for him salvation, and his arm is holy. Glory be to the Father.”

The Church again invites the faithful in these words of the royal prophet, to praise God, who by the great miracle of the resurrection of His Son, revealed to the world His omnipotence, kindness, and justice towards His children, by saving them even in a higher sense than He did the Israelites, from the enemies of their salvation.

PRAYER.

O God, who dost unite the hearts of the faithful in one will, grant to Thy people to love what Thou commandest, and to desire what Thou dost promise, that among the changes of this world our hearts may be fixed on that place where true joys reside. Through our Lord. Amen.

EPISTLE.—James 1: 17-21.

“Dearly beloved: Every best gift, and every perfect gift, is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no change, nor shadow of alteration. For of his own will hath he begotten us by the word of truth, that we might be some beginning of his creature. You know, my dearest brethren: and let every man be swift to hear, but slow to speak, and slow to anger. For the anger of man worketh not the justice of God. Wherefore casting away all uncleanness, and abundance of naughtiness, with meekness receive the ingrafted word, which is able to save your souls.”

The Apostle in these words admonishes those who had been converted to the Christian religion, that as every good and perfect gift comes from God the Omnipotent and immutable, so also did the greatest and most valuable gift which they had ever received; that is, their conversion to Christianity, their regeneration to a new, spiritual and heavenly creation, which was given them not through their own merits, but through the free will of God, and through His infinite love and mercy. The Apostle then reminds the faithful of all the gifts they had received without any merits of their own, and he entreats them to avoid carefully all contradictions and quarrels, all uncleanness and other sins usually

committed by the Jews, and rather to receive and practice with readiness, meekness and patience the ingrafted word of God. This important lesson of St. James proposed to us by the Church for our earnest consideration at this holy season, in which we are, through the redemption, perfected by Christ, reminds us also that we were free from sin through the grace of God alone, and that we were regenerated as children of God.

GOSPEL.—John 16 : 5-14.

“At that time Jesus said to his disciples: I go to him that sent me, and none of you asketh me: Whither goest thou? But because I have spoken these things to you, sorrow hath filled your heart. But I tell you the truth: it is expedient to you that I go: for if I go not, the Paraclete will not come to you: but if I go, I will send him to you. And when he is come, he will convince the world of sin, and of justice, and of judgment. Of sin: because they believed not in me. And of justice: because I go to the Father; and you shall see me no longer. And of judgment: because the prince of this world is already judged. I have yet many things to say to you: but you can not bear them now. But when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will teach you all truth. For he shall not speak of himself: but what things soever he shall hear, he shall speak, and the things that are come, he shall show you. He shall glorify me; because he shall receive of mine, and shall show it to you.”

In the Gospel of to-day, which is taken from the last discourse of our Saviour to His disciples, He comforts them by promising that immediately after His return to His father, He would send them the Holy Ghost who would take His place, and whom He therefore very appropriately calls the comforter. Christ reproaches His disciples because they had given themselves up to such immoderate grief, when hearing of His approaching departure from them, and because they had not considered the higher motives which had made it necessary for Him to return to His Father, and which would result in bringing blessings upon them. On this point, especially, the Lord instructs them in the following words: “It is expedient to you that I go, for if I go not, the Paraclete will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you.” These words of Christ mean, that the Holy Ghost, in the fullness of His graces and gifts, could not be given to them until the Son of God had perfected His work upon earth and had retired to heaven, from whence, when intimately connected with His heavenly Father, He would send them the Holy Ghost, proceeding from Him and the Father, so as to spread the work of salvation upon earth, and to render it effective in them, and in all the faithful. Thus it was, that the separation from their beloved Master, which they considered according to their own narrow and human judgment as a great evil, was in truth a great blessing, because the most salutary consequences resulted from it. In like manner, many events in life,



which in our short-sighted judgment we think very sad and deplorable, because at the moment we feel the pain, become in God's wise providence a blessing. We find them even necessary for our welfare by their beneficial consequences, which we do not always see and understand at the time.

To the promise of sending the Holy Ghost our Saviour adds the EFFECTS which the Holy Ghost would produce upon earth, and mentions three, saying: "He (the Holy Ghost,) will convince the world (that is all men not yet converted to the belief in Christ, all Jews and Gentiles) of SIN, of JUSTICE, and JUDGMENT." He then explains these words by continuing: "Of SIN, BECAUSE THEY BELIEVED NOT IN ME." Our Saviour defines UNBELIEF as a SIN in the strictest sense of the word, because from it all other sins proceed, and as long as it exists, it will include all other sins and keep men fettered in them. Of the sin of unbelief the Holy Ghost was to convince the world, and He did so on Pentecost, when He descended upon the Apostles, converting on the same day three thousand men, who had previously entertained no belief in Christ, and changing them into new creatures. The Holy Ghost has continued to convince the world of the sin of infidelity, since through the effects of His grace the number of those who have left the errors of Judaism and Paganism and have been converted to the true Catholic faith is constantly increasing. "The Holy Ghost will convince the world of justice because I go to the Father and you shall see me no longer." This is to say: The world and the worldly-minded have so far not understood my divine mission, they have rather believed me a sinner and a criminal, they have traduced my doctrine and my life, as if they suspected me of aspiring to worldly honor and glory; but because I go to my Father and there remain in my glory, my works in the kingdom of grace can then no longer be denied to be the works of Him who has been glorified by the Father, then too will be apparent to all, how true and just, how holy and divine were my life and my labors, and that I, the Just, the Truthful, am God.

The Holy Ghost would convince the world of this by the extraordinary wonders wrought in the name of Jesus by the Apostles after the descent of the Holy Ghost, proving thereby irrefragably the truth and divinity of His doctrine.

"Of JUDGMENT (will the Holy Ghost convince the world) because the prince of this world is already judged." The Holy Ghost, according to these words, was to convince the world by the effects which He would produce, of the fact, that the power of Satan the prince of this world, was broken, his kingdom upon earth destroyed, and that he with all his adherents were damned for ever. A visible sign of the fallen power of Satan and of the destruction of His kingdom was the overthrow of the temples and altars of the idols, the gradual disappearance of the rites of Paganism and of the vices connected with it, and on the other hand the wonderfully rapid increase of the Church of Christ, as the kingdom of God upon earth, together with the sublime light of her faith, the splen-

dor of her Christian virtues, the beauty and attractiveness of her temples and the manifold ceremonies instituted in honor of her divine founder, demonstrate to all men the perpetuity and glory of the Church.

At the close of the Gospel of to-day our Saviour promises His disciples first, that the Holy Ghost will teach them all the divine truths, which in consequence of their limited understanding they could not then comprehend, and which He therefore kept from them; the Holy Ghost was not to promulgate a new doctrine, different from His own, but the Holy Ghost, of one and the same substance with Him and the Father, and proceeding at the same time from both, would teach them the same truths which He the Son of God, the Word of God the Father, had brought down from heaven and had announced to them.

## FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER EASTER.

CALLED ALSO

### SUNDAY "VOCES JUCUNDITATIS, OR ROGATE."

THIS Sunday is called "Rogate," because the week commencing with this day, is called Rogation-week, and the first three days the Rogation-days, of which we shall afterwards speak.

INTROIT OF THE MASS.—Isaiah 48 : 20.

"Declare the voice of joy, and let it be heard, alleluia; declare it even to the ends of the world, the Lord hath delivered his people, alleluia, alleluia. Shout with joy to God, all the earth, sing ye a psalm to his name, give glory to his praise. Glory be to the Father."

These words of the prophet, in which he expresses his joy at the approaching return of the Israelites from Babylonian captivity, the Church refers in a higher sense to the rejoicing of the faithful over their deliverance from the bondage of Satan, effected through the Redemption of Christ.

PRAYER.

O God, from whom all good things proceed, grant to Thy suppliants that by Thy inspiration we may think those things that are right, and by Thy direction perform them. Through our Lord.

EPISTLE.—James 1 : 22-27.

“Dearly beloved : Be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves. For if a man be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he shall be compared to a man beholding his natural countenance in a glass. For he beheld himself, and went his way, and presently forgot what manner of man he was. But he that hath looked into the perfect law of liberty, and hath continued therein, not becoming a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work ; this man shall be blessed in his deed. And if any man think himself to be religious, not bridling his tongue, but deceiving his own heart, this man’s religion is vain. Religion clean and undefiled before God and the Father, is this : to visit the fatherless and widows in their tribulation ; and to keep one’s self unspotted from this world.”

The Epistle of to-day is almost identical with that of last Sunday. The Apostle admonishes the faithful, whom he had a short time before exhorted to receive willingly the word of God, not only to hear it, but also to practice and follow it, and calls attention to the fact, that the mere hearing of the divine word would be of no use for the salvation of their souls. The Apostle then shows how we must practice and carry out the word of God by bridling the tongue, that is, by avoiding all manner of evil speaking, by being merciful and charitable towards the poor and needy, by works of mercy towards our neighbor, and by remaining pure and undefiled before the world, that is, avoiding all excesses and unlawful attachments to worldly things.

Such conduct the Apostle justly calls a clean and undefiled religion, because we can not show the homage due to God in a better manner, than despising out of love to Him, every thing in the world, avoiding sin and fulfilling faithfully His commandments.

GOSPEL.—John 16 : 23-30.

“At that time, Jesus said to his disciples : Amen, amen, I say to you, if you ask the Father any thing in my name, he will give it you. Hitherto you have not asked any thing in my name. Ask, and you shall receive : that your joy may be full. These things I have spoken to you in proverbs. The hour cometh when I will no more speak to you in proverbs, but will show you plainly of the Father. In that day you shall ask in my name : and I say not to you, that I will ask the Father for you. For the Father himself loveth you, because you have loved me, and have believed that I came out from God. I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world : again I leave the world, and I go to the Father. His disciples say to him : Behold now thou speakest plainly, and speakest no proverb. Now we know that thou knowest all things, and thou needest not that any man should ask thee. By this we believe that thou comest forth from God.”



In this Gospel our Saviour consoles His disciples by directing them to use His name in prayer, by doing which they would be heard before God, their Father in heaven. The Church proposes these words of Christ to us on this Sunday, because with this day begins Rogation-week, a time which should be especially devoted to prayer.

To pray in the name of Jesus means: 1. To ask the Father with confidence in His word, because He has directed us to Him.

2. Relying on His merits, we may expect to be heard in our prayer, not on account of our own worthiness, but through the power of His infinite merits. It is for this reason that, according to the instruction and example of our holy Church we usually conclude our prayers to God our heavenly Father with these words: Through Thy Son Jesus Christ, Our Lord. It means, finally, to pray according to the direction of Christ; that is, in the same manner in which He has taught us; and here we must consider two principal points. We first must pray for those things which our Saviour Himself has taught us to ask for, that is, for eternal and heavenly goods, for the true knowledge of God, for the faithful observance of His commandments, for constant increase in virtue and perfection and for the possession of eternal life. We must therefore pray for temporal goods only when they are necessary useful, and conducive to our true happiness. In relation to this our Saviour gives us the following beautiful advice: "Seek ye therefore first the kingdom of God and His justice, and all these things shall be added unto you." (Matt. 6 : 33.) He also teaches us the same in that most beautiful of all prayers, the Lord's Prayer, for six of the seven petitions refer to the eternal and heavenly goods, and only one (the fourth, Give us this day our daily bread) to temporal goods.

We must, secondly, pray in the manner in which we have been taught to pray by Christ:

1. WITH TRUE DEVOTION; for He says, that we must adore God IN SPIRIT AND IN TRUTH. (John 4 : 24.)

2. WITH TRUE HUMILITY, as He has taught us in the parable of the Pharisee and Publican. Luke. 18.)

3. WITH FIRM CONFIDENCE, to which He encourages us especially in the Gospel of the Rogation-days, and by the repeated assurance which He gave to the sick who were cured: "Thy faith (thy confidence) hath made thee whole." (Matt. 9 : 22; Mark 5 : 34; 10 : 52; Luke 7 : 50; 8 : 48.)

4. WITH PERSEVERANCE, which He proposes to us in the Gospel of the Rogation-days and by the parable of the unjust judge, who avenged the wrongs of a poor widow on account of her continued prayer and also by the example of the women of Canaan. (Matt. 15 : 22.)

5. WITH RESIGNATION TO THE WILL OF GOD, of which He Himself has given us the most beautiful example in the Garden of Olives. (Matt. 26 : 39.) Our Saviour then makes the following just remark to His disciples: "Hitherto you

have not asked any thing in my name," for their desires and petitions referred at that time especially to temporal goods, to a desire for preference over their companions, to obtaining the first places in His kingdom, of which they had an entirely wrong idea; but when Christ had ascended into heaven, they would, as He told them, be better instructed as to Him and His kingdom, and learn to pray in the right manner, that is, in His name, and their petitions would be heard, so that their joy would be perfect.

The holy Pope Gregory the Great gives us a beautiful instruction on praying in the name of Jesus; he says: "The name of Jesus means Redeemer or Saviour; he therefore prays in the name of the Saviour, who asks for the means of salvation; for if we ask what is not useful to us, we do not ask the Father in the name of Jesus. Therefore the Lord said to the Apostles, who were then of little faith: 'Hitherto you have not asked any thing in my name,' as if Christ meant to say: 'You have not asked any thing in the name of the Saviour, because you do not as yet desire eternal salvation.' Hence it came to pass, that Paul was not heard, (when he asked to be freed from strong temptation) because, as our Lord assured him, it would not have been of any advantage to his salvation, if he had been freed from it." (2 Cor. 12 : 8-9.)

Consider therefore and see, whether in your prayers you ask all things in the name of Jesus, that is, whether you desire the joy of eternal happiness; but you do not seek Jesus in the house of Jesus, if in the temple of eternity you ask importunately for the goods of this world.

The three days following the fifth Sunday after Easter, and immediately proceeding the Feast of the Ascension of our Lord, are called ROGATION-DAYS, and the whole week is called Rogation-week, because on these days public prayers are offered and processions held from one church to another. As the Blessed Sacrament was not carried in the procession, as on the feast of Corpus Christi, but the cross only, they were in Germany called processions with the Cross, and the week, Holy-Cross-week.

The origin of such public religious processions, which are frequently either misinterpreted or condemned by the enemies of the Church, is very ancient—older even than Christianity.

Among the Israelites we find such processions held on important occasions, for instance, after the passage of the Jewish people through the Red Sea and at the destruction of the Egyptian host (Exod. 15) at the fall of Jericho under Josue, (Josue 6 : 4-5,) at the translation of the ark of the covenant to Jerusalem by king David, (2. Kings. 5 : 6.) and at the dedication of the temple by Solomon. (3 Kings 8 : 3-6.) Even among the heathens, according to the testimony of Plato, Cicero, Pliny, and other celebrated writers, these processions were held in atonement for their own sins but more especially in honor of their God. Christ Himself entered Jerusalem accompanied by a multitude of people who walked in procession. (John 12 : 12-13.) At later periods, even in the

time of the Christian persecution, we find that processions were held. Thus in the year two hundred and fifty-eight, the body of the holy Bishop and Martyr Cyprian was brought the night after his death by a large procession of Christians, carrying torches from the place of execution to a decent place of burial. And when in the year two hundred and ninety, during the persecution of the Christians under the emperor Diocletian, the body of St. Boniface, who suffered martyrdom at Tarsus, Asia, was brought to Rome, a great number of Ecclesiastics and other faithful met it chanting solemn hymns, to bear it into the city with all honor.

After the persecution, when Christians enjoyed greater liberties and were allowed to hold their services publicly, processions became more frequent and solemn. According to the writings of St. Chrysostom, St. Basil, St. Ambrose, St. Augustine, and other Fathers of the Church, processions were held in order to add the solemnity of the great festivals of the Church, and to implore God's assistance and mercy in time of need. Even in the early ages of the Church the cross was carried first, then followed the priests with the images and relics of the Saints, and then came the people, according to their rank in life.

In accordance with their cause and object, these processions received their names. In the earliest times they were called STATIONS, which word was meant to signify the gathering of the faithful who met, in order to attend at a certain place, or at a certain church, the holy sacrifice of the Mass and other prayers, from which church the station then received its name. If for instance they went in solemn procession to the church of the Holy Cross, it was called the STATION OF THE HOLY CROSS (*Statio ad Sanctam Crucem*), which expression is still used. With these stations were also connected FASTS, hence the so-called STATION-FASTS.

If such public processions were held for the purpose of imploring God's help in affliction and misfortune, they were called Rogations, (ROGATIONES in Latin, and LITANIAE in Greek) and as on such occasions different prayers were said to invoke the mercy of God, and the intercession of the Saints, these prayers were then and are still called LITANIES.

The procession on Rogation-days before the Feast of the Ascension, was instituted in the year four hundred and seventy, by St. Mamertus, Bishop of Vienne, France, at a time when that city and the neighboring places were visited by earthquakes, failure of crops, conflagrations, and other calamities. To avert the judgment of God which was visible in these afflictions, the Saint instituted processions, fasts, and prayers during these three days; and as the Almighty shewed mercy to His afflicted people, and the plague ceased, the processions were always held on these days. The custom spread throughout France, and was finally instituted for the whole Church toward the end of the eighth century by Pope Leo III., but the fast is not observed, as the Rogation-days fall in the Easter-time, a season of joy.



During these processions the Litany of the Saints is said, to invoke the powerful intercession of the Saints in heaven in our behalf. As the Rogation-days fall, when the crops of the field are just appearing, it is only natural, that the faithful should pray God, the Giver of all good things, and from whom alone all benefits proceed, for the blessing of a fruitful year. It possesses, however, even a higher meaning, as the three days immediately precede the Feast of the Ascension of the Lord. This wise provision of our holy Church should encourage us to look up with confidence to our Saviour, who ascended into heaven, to beseech Him to be our Mediator before the heavenly Father, to prepare for us in heaven an eternal dwelling, and to assist and protect us in all our necessities of soul and body.

INTROIT OF THE MASS.—Ps. 17.

“He heard my voice from his holy temple, alleluia, and my cry before him came into his ears, alleluia, alleluia. I will love thee, O Lord, my strength: the Lord is my firmament, and my refuge, and my deliverer. Glory be to the Father.”

These words spoken by king David in thanksgiving to the Lord for having freed him from his enemies and from king Saul, the Catholic Church very properly uses at this time, so that all the faithful may praise the Lord with a grateful heart for the assistance which they have received during life and to direct us to pray with confidence to Him as our helper and liberator, refuge and strength.

PRAYER.

Grant, we beseech Thee, O Almighty God, that we, who in affliction confide in Thy mercy, may be defended by Thy protection against all adversities. Through our Lord.

EPISTLE.—James. 5 : 16-20.

“Dearly beloved: Confess your sins one to another: and pray one for another, that you may be saved. For the continual prayer of a just man availeth much. Elias was a man passible like unto us; and with prayer he prayed that it might not rain upon the earth, and it rained not for three years and six months. And he prayed again: and the heaven gave rain, and the earth brought forth her fruit. My brethren, if any of you err from the truth, and one convert him: he must know, that he who causeth a sinner to be converted from the error of his way, shall save his soul from death, and shall cover a multitude of sins.”

In these words of the Apostle the Church teaches us with what dispositions

we should pray to God, in order to be heard. We must first cleanse ourselves from sin by true penance and sincere confession of our sins, and then, when free from sin and again received as children of God, we should approach Him with confidence, since God according to His own assertion does not hear the prayer of the impenitent sinner (Isaias 59 : 1-5,) but is merciful to those who forsake the way of sin and do penance. (Isaias 55 : 7.) As an example of how effective is the prayer of the just, the Apostle mentions the prayer of Elias the prophet, who by his prayer obtained in punishment for the wickedness of king Achab and the whole people of Israel, that the entire land should be visited for many years by a terrible drought and then on their repentance that the drought ceased and the Lord again gave rain and fruitfulness to the earth.

St. James especially admonishes the faithful in the above words of the Epistle, to pray for the salvation of their brethren—a most important Christian duty. Thus to effect the conversion of a sinner, and therefore the deliverance of his soul from eternal death is a very meritorious work, and is one which brings a blessing not only upon him who is saved, but also upon him who was the cause of conversion. St. Chrysostom adds to these words of the Apostle the following beautiful instruction: “If mariners, whose own ship is obliged to combat with storms see others, even at a distance, in danger of shipwreck, they are ready at once to assist them; they take in their sails, cast anchor, and throw out ropes and planks as a means of saving those who are shipwrecked. Imitate the sailor if you see any one struggling with the waves, (that is with the dangers of the world), and see him in danger of sinking; leave your occupation and endeavor to save him; for there is nothing more precious than the soul, not even the whole world; if you were to give to the poor untold wealth, it would be less than to save one soul.”

GOSPEL.—Luke 11 : 5-13.

“At that time Jesus said to his disciples: Which of you shall have a friend, and shall go to him at midnight, and shall say to him: Friend, lend me three loaves, because a friend of mine is come off his journey to me, and I have not what to set before him. And he from within should answer and say: Trouble me not, the door is now shut, and my children are with me in bed; I cannot rise and give thee. Yet if he shall continue knocking, I say to you, although he will not rise and give him, because he is his friend; yet because of his importunity he will rise, and give him as many as he needeth. And I say to you, Ask, and it shall be given you: seek, and you shall find: knock, and it shall be opened to you. For every one that asketh, receiveth: and he that seeketh, findeth: and to him that knocketh, it shall be opened. And which of you if he ask his father bread, will he give him a stone? or a fish, will he for a fish give him a serpent? Or if he shall ask an egg, will he reach him a scorpion?

If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father from heaven give the good Spirit to them that ask him?"

Our Saviour teaches us by different beautiful parables to have perseverance and firm confidence in our prayers and expressly declares, that God our merciful Father will most willingly hear our petitions and will give us good gifts, especially the true and eternal goods of heaven, since even sinners comply with the wishes of these friends, who repeatedly ask them for assistance, and who give not hurtful, but good gifts to their children, when they ask for them.

St. Ambrose makes a most instructive application of the parable of the man who goes to his friend at midnight for three loaves of bread; he says: "These words of our Lord teach us, that we should pray to God at all times, not only during the day, but also in the night, for you see that he, who came at midnight to his friend for three loaves of bread, asked not in vain, because he persevered in asking.

"What do those three loaves of bread signify but the food of heavenly mysteries? If you love God your Lord, you can ask not only for yourself, but also for others; for who can be a greater friend to us than He who has given His life for us? David asked for three loaves of bread, he asked and received; he asked for them when he said: 'I rose at midnight to give praise to thee.' (Ps. 118 : 62.) He therefore obtained the spiritual food, which he has given to us in his psalms. He asked for the loaves when he said: 'I have labored in my groanings, every night I will wash my bed; I will water my couch with my tears;' (Ps. 6 : 7,) for he was in no fear of awakening Him, whom he knew to be ever watching. We should also be mindful of the above passage of the holy Scripture, and should pray day and night, and ask forgiveness of our sins. If David, the holy king, who was constantly occupied with the affairs of his kingdom, could give praise seven times a day to God (Ps. 118 : 164, and prayed always at the morning and evening sacrifice, (Ps. 62 : 7 ; 140 : 2,) what should we not do, who must pray whenever we err through the frailty of our flesh and of our spirit, so that when wearied on our toilsome journey through this world, and tormented by the plagues of this life, we may not be in want of that refreshing food, which strengthens the hearts of men? Not only at midnight, but at every moment must we watch according to the admonition of the Lord, for He comes in the evening, at midnight, or early in the morning. 'Blessed are those servants, whom the Lord when He cometh shall find watching.' (Luke 12 : 37 ; Matt. 24 : 46.) If you, therefore, desire the assistance of God's grace, watch; for the good also have many temptations, and if the spirit should fall asleep with the already sleeping body, then is all life and strength lost. Arise therefore from your sleep, in order to knock at the door of Christ."



PRAYERS.

*To avert the Punishment of God.*

O God, who by sin art offended, and by penance pacified, mercifully regard the prayers of Thy people, making supplications to Thee, and turn away the scourges of Thy anger, which we deserve for our sins. Through Christ, our Lord.

*In Time of Famine.*

Give, O Lord, we beseech Thee, the desired effect to our supplications, and mercifully avert famine, that the world may know that these scourges come from Thy anger, and cease through Thy mercy. Through Christ our Lord.

*For Rain.*

O God, in whom we live, move, and are, give us a prosperous rain, that we being abundantly provided with temporal goods, may with more confidence desire the eternal. Through Christ, our Lord.

*For Fair Weather.*

We cry to Thee, O Lord, and humbly ask Thee, give us serene weather. Let us who are justly punished for our sins, experience Thy guiding mercy and kindness. Through Christ, our Lord. Amen.

*For all in Affliction.*

Almighty, Eternal God, consolation of the afflicted and strength of the weak, let the supplications of those reach Thee who cry to Thee in their adversities, that they may experience in their need, that Thy mercy has delivered them. Through Christ, our Lord.

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ST. MARK.

(For the Life of this Saint, See April 25, page 544.)

INTROIT OF THE MASS.—PS. 63.

“Thou hast protected me, O God, from the assembly of the malignant, alleluia! from the multitude of the workers of iniquity, alleluia, alleluia. Hear, O God, my prayer when I make supplication to thee; deliver my soul from the fear of the enemy. Glory be to the Father.”

This fervent prayer of the royal prophet, who had implicit confidence in the Lord's assistance, when surrounded by enemies, the Church very appropriately applies not only to St. Mark, when he was persecuted by the enemies of God, but also to all just men who are in peril; she admonishes us at the same time, that in all dangers of soul and body we should confidently turn to God, our powerful and merciful protector.

## PRAYER.

O God, who didst exalt blessed Mark, Thy evangelist, by the grace of preaching the Gospel, grant, we beseech Thee, that we may ever profit by his erudition and be defended by his prayer. Through our Lord.

## EPISTLE.—Ezekiel 1 : 10-14.

“The likeness of the face of the four living creatures: the face of a man, and the face of a lion on the right side of all the four: and the face of an ox, on the left side of all the four: and the face of an eagle over all the four. And their faces, and their wings were stretched upward: two wings of every one were joined, and two covered their bodies: And every one of them went straight forward: whither the impulse of the spirit was to go, thither they went: and they turned not when they went. And as for the likeness of the living creatures, their appearance was like that of burning coals of fire, and like the appearance of lamps. This was the vision running to and fro in the midst of the living creatures, a bright fire, and lightning going forth from the fire. And the living creatures ran and returned like flashes of lightning.”

In the above Epistle the vision of the prophet Ezechiel is described. The prophet sees the figure of a man, surrounded by splendor, sitting upon a throne, which was upheld by four living creatures beside which were revolving wheels. In explanation of this vision all Jewish and Christian interpreters agree, in understanding a symbolic representation of Jehovah, the God of the chosen people; they disagree however, which of the attributes or actions of God are signified by the emblems quoted in the above passage. Some understand by the vision the Almighty, others the majesty and glory of God; others, God punishing the Jews through the Chaldeans, others again, the Divine Providence; and others still, God revealing Himself in Christ. If we examine the faces of the vision, which God Himself commands us to do, (Ezek. 40 : 4; Dan. 10 : 1,) we find that according to the general rules of iconology, they point to the relation between the Almighty and the chosen people, they represent the Almighty as a human, royal, sacerdotal, and divine Lord; we must however remark, that the attributes of divinity are very striking in the vision, because the vision was to precede the calling of Ezechiel to the office of prophet, and his prophecies were to be the announcement of punishment to the people.

God therefore appears in the figure of living creatures, who are subservient to Him, in the same manner as He protects mankind through created beings, the angels. (Hebr. 1 : 14.) The living creatures were called in another place (Ezec. 10 : 15-20) Cherubim, that is, **STRONG, POWERFUL**. They are those that carry the Almighty, (1 Kings, 4 : 4 ; Ps. 17 : 11 ; Ezec. 10 : 1,) that is, to whom God working for men, has confided His power in order that they may work in His kingdom upon earth. They are, according to the opinion of the Jews and Christians, not only symbolic figures, but really existing beings, Angels of the first order, like the Seraphim. (Isaias. 6 : 2-3.) The symbolic figure chosen to illustrate their power, or rather the power of God in the government of the divine kingdom upon earth, is given by Ezechiel as follows : They are, (according to the following description) creatures looking like men, around whose head are four faces, that of a man, of a lion, of an ox, and of an eagle ; they stand straight like men, and have four wings and four hands, their foot is like that of a calf ; the whole body is covered with eyes. If we take into consideration the single parts of these symbolic figures we see represented at once the omnipotence of God, the fundamental attribute of the divine being ; for the creatures : man, lion, ox, and eagle are, according to iconology, emblems of power. Being connected in one figure, they seem to indicate not only omnipotence, but also its different attributes ; since, according to iconology, these creatures represent different characters. By the face of the man, humanity seems to be symbolized ; by the lion, dominion ; by the ox, atonement ; and by the eagle, who in ancient times was called " the bird of God,"—sharp-sightedness, wisdom, and divinity ; so that in the Cherubim is represented Jehovah, the God of the chosen people in as far as He makes known His omnipotence a human, kingly, and atoning Lord. As such He revealed Himself in the old law, especially in the commandments, and for this reason He sits above the ark upon the Cherubim. (2 Kings 6 : 2.) As such He revealed Himself also in the new law, for Christ, who in His divinity, is one and the same with Jehovah of the old law, is **MAN, KING, PRIEST, and GOD**. It is probable that the number of the four Cherubim is the emblem of perfection ; others, however, believe that they represent the four Angels who are the most active in the kingdom of God : Michael, Raphael, Gabriel, and Uriel, and some of the most learned Doctors of the Church maintain, that the four Cherubim are prophetic emblems of the four Evangelists, as they represent Christ, according to His four attributes as **Man, King, Priest, and God**.

GOSPEL.—Luke 10: 1-9.

"At that time : The Lord appointed also other seventy-two : and he sent them two and two before his face into every city and place whither he himself was to come. And he said to them : The harvest indeed is great, but the labor-



ers are few. Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he send laborers into his harvest. Go: Behold I send you as lambs among wolves. Carry neither purse nor scrip, nor shoes; and salute no man by the way. Into whatsoever house you enter, first say: Peace be to this house: And if the son of peace be there, your peace shall rest upon him: but if not, it shall return to you. And in the same house remain, eating and drinking such things as they have. For the laborer is worthy of his hire. Remove not from house to house. And into what city soever you enter, and they receive you, eat such things as are set before you; and heal the sick that are therein, and say to them: The kingdom of God is come nigh unto you."

As our Saviour had already sent the twelve Apostles, to take part in His work of proclaiming the Gospel everywhere in the cities and villages of Judea, so He next selected from among the many disciples, who followed Him for the same object, seventy-two others, among whom was St. Mark. According to the general opinion of the Holy Fathers and the unanimous belief of the whole Catholic Church, a certain rank existed among the disciples elect; the twelve Apostles were the first in rank, as the immediate representatives of the Saviour Himself; the seventy-two disciples belonged to the second rank, and possessed less power. It is for this reason, that from the earliest times of Christianity the Bishops were considered to be the supreme Pastors of the Church, as the successors of the Apostles, and the Priests as the successors of the seventy-two disciples.

Our Saviour sent them out two and two for the reason, that as they were not yet tried and confirmed in proclaiming the Gospel, like the Apostles, they should assist, console, and encourage each other, and thus working with one spirit attain with more facility the object of their mission. He sent them, according to the Gospel, before His face into every city and place, whither He Himself was to come, in order to prepare the hearts of men for His coming, and dispose them favorable to His divine doctrine. St. Gregory the Great very justly remarks: "Not in vain is it said: He sent them before His face into every city and place whither He Himself was to come; the Lord follows His preachers, for first comes the preaching, and then the Lord enters into the abode of our hearts. In the same sense Isaias said to the preachers: Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight His paths. (Isaias 40 : 3.) And David says: Make a way for Him, who ascendeth upon the west. (Ps. 67 : 5.) The Lord ascended upon the west, when after the humiliation of His sufferings He revealed His glory the more at His resurrection; for He in truth ascended upon the west, because through His resurrection He trampled on the death which He suffered. We therefore prepare the way of Him, who ascended upon the west by announcing His glory to your hearts, so that when He follows, He may enlighten you through the possession of His love."

The procession on St. Mark's day originated in the following manner: In the year 590 a pestilence broke out in the city of Rome, during which all who yawned or sneezed soon fell down and died, from which arose the custom of saying to any one who sneezed, "God bless you," and the habit of making the sign of the cross over the mouth when one gaped. St. Gregory the Great then appointed a great procession by means of which the plague disappeared. On the same day an Angel in the act of sheathing a bloody sword was seen upon the castle of Rome, which denoted the cessation of the plague. In memory of this event a gilded statue of St. Michael the Archangel was placed upon the castle, which has ever afterwards been known as "the castle of St. Angelo."

## VIGIL OF THE ASCENSION.

Introit of the Mass, and Prayer the same as last Sunday.

EPISTLE.—Ephesians 4 : 7-13.

"Brethren: To every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the giving of Christ. Wherefore he saith: Ascending on high, he led captivity captive; he gave gifts to men. Now, that he ascended, what is it, but because he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth? He that descended is the same also that ascended above all the heavens, that he might fill all things. And he gave some Apostles, and some prophets, and other some Evangelists, and other some pastors and doctors. For the perfecting of the Saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ; Until we all meet into the unity of faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the age of the fullness of Christ."

The Apostle in this passage instructs the faithful on the blessed effects of redemption, which in itself is alike for all men, since through it all become children of God and heirs of heaven, but it varies in the outward form, since the faithful according to their faculty and according to the will of God, are called to different offices and occupations in the Church. The Apostle at the same time explains a passage of the prophecies of David, in which he predicted the triumph of the Son of God at His ascension, when He would lead captivity captive; that is, according to the interpretation of the Holy Fathers, He would overcome, and, as it were, make captive the enemies of our salvation, the devil, sin, death, and the world, and would also deliver from captivity and take into heaven with Him all those who were deprived of their liberty by those enemies, and held captive, (especially the souls of the just in limbo.)

GOSPEL. John. 17 : 1-11.

“At that time : Jesus lifting up his eyes to heaven, said : Father, the hour is come : glorify thy Son, that thy Son may glorify thee. As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he may give eternal life to all whom thou hast given him. Now this is eternal life. That they may know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent. I have glorified thee on the earth ; I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do, and now glorify thou me, O Father, with thyself, with the glory which I had, before the world was made, with thee. I have manifested thy name to the men whom thou hast given me out of the world. Thine they were and to me thou gavest them, and they have kept thy word. Now they have known that all things which thou hast given me are from thee ; because the words which thou gavest me, I have given to them, and they have received them, and have known in very deed, that I came out from thee, and they have believed, that thou didst send me. I pray for them ; I pray not for the world, but for them, whom thou hast given me, because they are thine, and all my things are thine, and thine are mine, and I am glorified in them. And now I am not in the world, and these are in the world, and I come to thee.”

The Church to-day very appropriately recounts to us the beginning of that sublime prayer, which our Saviour offered up to His heavenly Father, at the conclusion of His life upon earth, and immediately after His last beautiful discourse, in which He prays for His disciples and for all the faithful in all future ages ! We can select no better meditation than the words spoken by our Saviour before His death, in which He evinces His interest in our salvation, and in His Church. St. Augustine, in speaking of this prayer of our Lord, says : Christ, who is one and co-eternal with the Father, who assumed the form of a servant, could, if He wished, have prayed in silence, but He desired to present Himself to the Father praying, in order to become our teacher. Therefore He has made known to us the prayer which He offered up in our behalf, because not only are the words addressed by such a Master to His disciples edifying, but His prayer addressed to His heavenly Father is also most instructive ; not only to those who were present, but to us also who read it in the holy Scriptures. He therefore said : Father, the hour is come, glorify thy Son ; showing thereby that time and all that He does and permits, is directed by Him, who is not governed by time, because whatever happens in time, has its cause in the wisdom of God, in whom change of time has no place. We should therefore not believe, that the hour had come by chance, but rather by the wise disposition of God. The sufferings of Christ were not brought on by a necessity dependant upon the stars, for far be it from our belief, that the stars could force the Creator of the stars to die. Many believe that the Son was glorified by the Father in not having been spared, but in having been sacrificed for our sakes ; if how-



ever He was glorified by His sufferings and death, how much more was He glorified by His resurrection! For in His sufferings and death His humiliation was made more manifest than in His glorification, for the Apostle says: "He humbled Himself, becoming obedient unto death, even to the death of the cross; for which cause God also hath exalted Him, and hath given Him a name which is above all names, that in the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those that are in heaven, on earth, and under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that the Lord Jesus Christ is in the glory of God the Father."

The glorification of Christ commenced with His resurrection.

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## FEAST OF THE ASCENSION.

THE Feast of the Ascension is intimately connected with Easter; it is, as it were, the fulfilment of what we have celebrated on that solemn feast, and should therefore fill us not less with holy joy, gratitude, love, and veneration toward Christ, our Saviour and Redeemer.

For as the resurrection of our Lord from the dead was the fulfilment of the great work of redemption and His greatest miracle on earth, so likewise is His ascension the fulfilment of His earthly life, and the seal of all His divine deeds upon earth; as His resurrection was the victory over hell, so is His ascension a triumph which He, the Son of God, celebrated after His victory; and as the resurrection of the Lord is both a pledge and a type of our resurrection from the grave, in the same manner is His ascension a type of our reception into heaven. St. Leo the Great thus beautifully expresses himself on the close connection between these two great festivals, Easter and the Ascension: "On this day, dearly beloved brethren, we celebrate the fortieth day after the blessed and glorious Resurrection of our Lord, when He by His omnipotence rebuilt in three days the true temple of God (His body), which had been destroyed by the wicked Jews. By divine decree it has been appointed, and for the benefit of our instruction it has been established, that by Christ's stay upon earth the belief in His resurrection is confirmed by many proofs. The death of Christ had produced confusion in the hearts of His disciples; and through His ignominious punishment on the cross, through the giving up of His spirit, through the burial of His dead body, a certain fear had crept into their hearts, already pierced with grief; but the blessed Apostles and all the disciples, whom the terrible sacrifice upon the cross had intimidated, and who even doubted the truth of the resurrection, were now confirmed by intuitive truth, so that, when the Lord ascended into heaven, they were not overcome by sadness, but were filled with joy. Verily

an exceedingly great cause for joy was given them, since in presence of the company of angels, the nature of man raised above the dignity of all heavenly creatures, ascends above the choirs of angels and archangels, knows no bounds to its elevation, until sitting at the right hand of the heavenly Father, it participates in His glory upon the throne, with whose divine nature it was united in the Son. As therefore, dearly beloved, the ascension of Christ is our elevation, and as, where the glorified Head has preceded, there the hope of the body should be directed; let us rejoice in a becoming manner, and give thanks; for on this day we are not only replaced in the possession of Paradise, but we are advanced into heaven itself with Christ, and have through the abundant grace of Christ, obtained more than we had lost through the malice of Satan. For we, whom the poisonous serpent had expelled from the happiness of our first abode, have been placed by the Son of God, as belonging to Himself, at the right hand of the Father, with whom He lives and reigns in unity with the Holy Ghost, God, for ever and ever."

On the festival of the Ascension, the Paschal-candle is extinguished after the Gospel, to intimate that Christ, represented by the candle, left His disciples on the fortieth day after His resurrection, and again returned to His heavenly Father.

The Feast of the Ascension, on account of its important signification, is one of the highest festivals of the Church, and has an Octave.

INTROIT OF THE MASS.—Acts 1 : 11.

"Ye men of Galilee, why wonder you, looking up to heaven? Alleluia. He shall so come as you have seen him going up into heaven, alleluia! alleluia! alleluia! O clap your hands, all ye nations, shout unto God with the voice of joy."

The Church recounts the words spoken by the Angel to the Apostles when Christ ascended to heaven, and admonishes us in the words of the royal singer to praise Him, who so gloriously celebrated His triumph over hell.

PRAYER.

Grant, we beseech Thee, Almighty God, that we who believe that Thy only-begotten Son, our Redeemer, ascended this day into heaven, may ourselves also, in mind, dwell in heavenly things. Through Christ.

EPISTLE.—Acts 1 : 1-11.

"The former treatise I made, O Theophilus, of all things which Jesus began to do and to teach, until the day on which, giving commandments by the Holy Ghost to the apostles whom he had chosen, he was taken up. To whom also he showed himself alive after his passion, by many proofs, for forty days appear-

ing to them, and speaking of the kingdom of God. And eating together with them, he commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but should wait for the promise of the Father, which you have heard, saith he, by my mouth: for John, indeed, baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence. They therefore who were come together asked him, saying: Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel? But he said to them: It is not for you to know the times or moments which the Father hath put in his own power. But you shall receive the power of the Holy Ghost coming upon you, and you shall be witnesses unto me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and Samaria, and even to the uttermost part of the earth. And when he had said these things, while they looked on, he was raised up: and a cloud received him out of their sight. And while they were beholding him going up to heaven, behold two men stood by them in white garments, who also said: Ye men of Galilee, why stand you looking up to heaven? This Jesus who is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come as you have seen him going into heaven."

This lesson contains the beginning of the Acts, written by St. Luke. the Evangelist, who, according to his own words, addressed it and his Gospel to Theophilus, a prominent Christian, afterwards, it is said, Bishop of Antioch. As the Epistle coincides in the principal points with those of the Gospel, the same explanation will do for both.

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GOSPEL.—Mark 16: 14–20.

"At that time: As the eleven were at table, Jesus appeared to them, and he upraided them with their incredulity and hardness of heart, because they did not believe them who had seen him after he was risen again. And he said to them: Go ye into the whole world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved: but he that believeth not shall be condemned. And these signs shall follow them that believe: in my name they shall cast out devils: they shall speak with new tongues: they shall take up serpents: and if they shall drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them: they shall lay their hands upon the sick, and they shall recover. And the Lord Jesus, after he had spoken to them, was taken up into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of God. But they going forth preached everywhere: the Lord working withal, and confirming the word with signs that followed."

After His resurrection, our Lord remained forty days with His disciples, and ate and drank with them as a proof that He had truly risen from the dead. The wounds which He received at His crucifixion remained on His body, and He chose to take them into heaven, as a sign of the victory He had gained over hell, as a proof of His resurrection for His disciples, as an object of veneration



and gratitude for all the faithful, and as a visible sign of His infinite love, thereby animating their hope in Him, their Saviour and Redeemer. "The wounds," says St. Ambrose, "He wished to take with Him into heaven, to show to God the Father the value of our liberty, each of the five wounds being, as it were, a tongue, calling to God for grace and mercy."

Our Saviour spoke many things to His disciples before He left them; He instructed them more thoroughly as to the kingdom of God, the mysteries of religion, and all that was necessary for them to know, in order to establish and spread the kingdom of God upon earth.

The different apparitions of our Lord on Easter-day after His resurrection, made either to all or to some of His disciples, have been already mentioned.

That recounted to us in the Gospel of to-day, is the same as that later in the evening of the day of His resurrection, and has been treated upon in the first part of the Gospel on Whitsunday.

The commission immediately following, with which our Lord charged His disciples: "Go ye into the whole world, and preach the Gospel to every creature," was not given by our Lord on the day of His resurrection, but afterwards, when Christ appeared to the disciples on the mountain in Galilee.

Shortly after the colloquy with His disciples on the mountain in Galilee, on the fortieth day of His resurrection, our Saviour, according to the Epistle of to-day, assembled His disciples together in Jerusalem at a repast, when He conversed with them on many things, and again promised that the Holy Ghost should in a few days descend upon them. The effusion of the Holy Ghost upon the disciples He called baptism, on account of the fulness of grace which He would pour upon them, immersing them, as it were, in the fountain of grace.

After this last discourse, our Saviour conducted them from Jerusalem up to the Mount of Olives; for where His greatest humiliations had commenced, there should be revealed His glorification; a sign for the disciples and for us all, that as He, the Head desired to enter into glory through sufferings, so must we, the members, follow Him in the same way to His heavenly kingdom.

Before Christ left His disciples, He lifted up His hands, and blessed them, no doubt, with the sign of the cross, which sign the Church uses in all her benedictions. How powerful and effective was the blessing given at this moment by the Son of God to His faithful followers, a blessing which filled the hearts of those who received it with faith and confidence, with consolation and joy; which extends over the whole world, now redeemed and sanctified by Christ, and lying before Him like a new creation!

And while blessing, He departed from them, and was carried up to heaven, where He now sits at the right hand of God, His heavenly Father, clothed with the majesty which He had laid aside at His incarnation, to redeem man, and to make him partaker of the same glory.

The ascension of the Lord was typified in the old law by the wonderful depar-

ture of two just men from the world—of Enoch, whom the Lord took away from this world and translated into Paradise, to return and to convert the nations before the end of the world (Genesis 5:24; Ecclesiasticus 44:16) and of the great prophet Elias, who, in a similar manner, went to heaven in a fiery chariot, and who is also to preach penance at the end of time, and to combat with antichrist. (4 Kings 2:11; Apoc. 11.) According to the holy Scriptures, these two men are, however, not yet received into the real heaven, the place of happiness to which our Saviour was elevated after the work of redemption was finished; although Elias is said to have ascended into heaven, this is to be understood, according to the holy Pope Gregory the Great, as “the atmosphere nearest the earth, where the birds dwell, and who are therefore called the birds of heaven.” The two Saints of the old law, Enoch and Elias, have yet to suffer death before they can be received into heaven, just as Christ suffered death, but overcame it by His resurrection. Christ ascended into heaven through His own divine power; He ascended with His divinity and humanity.

“Acknowledge,” says St. Augustine, “in Him, who rose the divine omnipotence, and in Him who was raised up, the human nature. Thus He elevated human nature, corrupted by sin, and a prey to death, to its original perfection. He has, therefore, represented and established in a most striking and beautiful manner the immortality and eternal glory of the bodies of those who are redeemed by Him.”

St. Chrysostom also makes the following remarks thereon: “When Christ ascended into heaven, He offered up to His Father the first fruits of our race, and so much was the Father pleased with the offering, not only on account of the dignity of Him who offered it, but also on account of the purity of the offering itself; that, receiving it with His own hands, He placed it at His side, saying, ‘Sit thou at my right hand.’ (Ps. 109:1.) To which nature did God say, ‘Sit down at my right hand?’ It is evident that He said it to the same nature concerning which He once had said, ‘Dust thou art, and into dust thou shalt return.’ (Gen. 3:19.) Was it not enough to ascend into heaven? Was it not enough to enter into the company of the holy angels? Would this not be an inexpressible honor? But our nature was elevated above the Angels, it left the Archangels, the Cherubim and Seraphim, and all the powers of heaven far below it, and would not rest, until it arrived at the throne of God itself.

“Do you not see the space between heaven and earth? Do you not see what a space there is between hell and the earth, what space from the earth up to heaven, and from heaven to the more elevated heaven, and from the Angels to the Archangels, and from these to the highest powers of heaven, even to the throne of God? Up to such a height has our nature been elevated. Consider now into what a depth it was plunged, and to what a height it has been raised. Man could not fall lower than he did, and he could not be raised higher than he was elevated by Christ.”

As in the Old Testament the Lord revealed His presence and His glory to man through clouds; (Exodus. 16 : 10; 19 : 9; 24 : 15.) And as a bright cloud overshadowed the Son of God at His transfiguration on Mount Horeb, (Matt. 17 : 5, ) so at His Ascension a cloud received Him out of their sight."

St. Chrysostom says: "Elias went to heaven in a fiery chariot, Christ upon a cloud: when the servant was called, the chariot was sent, when the Son ascended, a cloud came. The seat not only of the Son, but also of the Father, for of the latter Isaiah says: "Behold the Lord will ascend upon a swift cloud." (Isaiah 19 : 1.)

According to the doctrine of the Catholic Church, the just of the old law, who sighed for the advent of Christ, and to whom He, after His death announced the kingdom of God, entered heaven together with our Saviour,—a worthy escort for Christ the heavenly King, glorifying thereby the triumph of His entrance into His eternal kingdom. With what joy must these elect have taken possession of the long expected, happy mansions of heaven; with what infinite veneration and delight must they have given thanks and adoration to the triune God whom they now first saw face to face! But with what rejoicing and jubilation must the holy Angels have met the Saviour, crowned with victory, as their glorified King. What homage must they not have paid Him, and what hymns must they not have sung, and filled with love, how must they not have received His blessed companions as their brethren and co-heirs! The Angels, says St. Augustine, see their King retain the life of the flesh, which He had gained, and ascend into heaven after overcoming the enemy of man. In the wounds, they see the marks of the combat, and venerate them in the wounded but restored flesh, in which there was no sin to be destroyed, and in which the dragon could leave no poison. The heavenly hosts rejoice, the trumpet of victory resounds, sweet hymns are sung, and the air is filled with chants. Behold, soon will appear upon their thrones the brilliant assemblage of heaven; all see Christ: His wounds shining with light, they see the spoils, (the souls of men) taken from the enemy, and admire the splendid trophies of divine power; then whole choirs sing with one voice: "Who is this King of glory? The Lord of hosts, he is the King of glory." (Ps. 23 : 10.)

When Christ ascended into heaven, His disciples stood there for some time, looking up to heaven after Him; the spectacle of our Saviour ascending thus wonderfully into heaven had thrown them into an ecstasy so that their eyes were fixed upon the place where they had seen Him last; when suddenly two angels dressed in white garments stood before them and said: "Ye men of Galilee, why stand you looking up to heaven? This Jesus who is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come as you have seen Him going into heaven!" The angels by these words intended to say to the disciples, "why do you stand and look, since Jesus has entered heaven? Do you desire to go thither;" obtain an entrance by the faithful fulfilment of your vocation, and by a continual effort



after holiness; for this Jesus shall (according to His own words, Matt. 24 : 30) come again in the clouds of heaven to judge the world. "Does any one desire to see Christ," says St. Chrysostom, "is any one sad when he sees himself separated from Him, let him listen to the words of the angels: He shall come; and let him prepare himself to receive Him, by a life worthy a disciple of Jesus." According to the Holy Scriptures, the disciples after having heard the words of the angels, adored with veneration their Master, who had so convincingly proved His divinity, and they then joyfully returned to Jerusalem. "And they were always in the temple, praying and blessing God." (Luke. 24 : 53.) Thus was shown the powerful effect of the blessing which our Saviour had imparted to His disciples before His ascension; *they adored Him as their God*, and as their hearts were filled with sadness when He foretold His departure, so were their hearts filled with joy when He had really departed from them and returned to His Father; for in an extacy at the glorification of their Master, and filled with the blessed hope, that they might soon also become partakers of His glory, they commenced to despise the things belonging to this world, and to seek only the things that are above. (Coloss. 3 : 1.) Their most delightful occupation now, was to praise and bless God in the temple.

St. Leo, in speaking of this event, expresses himself most beautifully by saying: "The holy apostles who had been confirmed by so many miracles, and instructed by so many conversations, who had been tempted at the sufferings of the Lord, and who had received so reluctantly the truth of His resurrection, now reaped so many fruits from the ascension of the Lord, that what had formerly been a cause of sadness to them, was now a cause of joy; for their whole mind was now engaged in the contemplation of the divinity of Him, who sitteth at the right hand of the Father: and they were not prevented by any corporal object from applying their intellect to the belief in that, which He had not in His incarnation separated from the Father, and which He had not in His Ascension taken from His disciples, that is, His divinity. At this time, beloved brethren, the Son of man, the Son of God, has revealed Himself in a most glorious and sublime manner, by returning to the glory of His heavenly Father, and has become nearer to us in His divinity, since He withdrew Himself in His humanity."

In looking after Christ ascended into heaven, we also should be filled with holy joy and grateful love towards Him, our glorified Redeemer; for to us also has He opened heaven by His glorious ascension. He has prepared for us there mansions, so that we may one day rejoice with Him in His eternal happiness. We should, therefore, like the Apostles, turn away our hearts from the world and all worldly things, and should direct our longings and desires whither our Saviour has preceded us, and where our true and everlasting dwelling is to be; and as long as we live in this place of exile, we should live so, that we can

stand before Him when He comes to judge the living and the dead in order to become partakers of His glory.

St. Augustine says: "The resurrection of the Lord raised us up from the dead, His ascension has initiated us into the same glory; in the body of our humanity with which He ascended into heaven, He has secured as it were our own reception into the kingdom of heaven. Let us endeavor therefore that as our Lord ascended with our body, to follow Him with our hearts on the wings of hope. Let us soar up with Him on the wings of holy love, so that even our earthly passions and faults may become the steps by which we ascend the heavenly ladder; for if we try to overcome them, and are strong enough to put them under our feet, they must be to us steps by which we ascend to heaven; they will elevate us if they are placed beneath our feet; for evil can not ascend with the author of all that is good; nor passion nor lust with the Son of the Virgin. No, sin can not ascend with the Father of virtue, nor crime with justice, nor weakness and infirmity with the great Physician."

If, therefore, we wish to enter the kingdom of the heavenly Physician, let us first heal our wounds. Let us preserve and keep in order the right condition of body and soul, so that the earthly part, the body, will not draw us down to hell, but the nobler part, the soul, will raise us up to heaven as a sanctified and glorified body. According to an old and venerable tradition, confirmed by several authentic historians, our Saviour left an impression of His footsteps on the very place where He stood last, and from which He ascended into heaven, and there it still remains, and the faithful have at all times, gathered earth or dust for their veneration from the very spot.

"We see there," says St. Augustine, "the impressions of His last footsteps; they are venerated on the place where His feet rested the last time, and from whence He was elevated into the air, in order to ascend into heaven. Some expression of Zachary the prophet seem to refer to this wonder, when he says: 'His feet shall stand in that day upon the Mount of Olives, which is over against Jerusalem against the East.' (Zach. 14: 4.) St. Helena afterwards built a beautiful church on the Mount of Olives; the spot, however, where the footsteps of Christ were impressed, could not be covered; whatever was laid on that place, was removed by an invisible power, so that the soil seemed to suffer nothing to be placed upon the spot where the feet of our Saviour had last rested, and from whence He had ascended into heaven. St. Jerome expressly declares, that in trying to close the arch of the church, it was found to be utterly impossible to cover up the place which in a perpendicular line stood over the footsteps of our Lord, so that the space from which our Saviour ascended into heaven, had to be left free and uncovered. This wonderful circumstance, however, did not continue after the old church was destroyed by the Saracens. At the present time, there is built over it a mosque (a Turkish house of prayer,) and it is said, that the stone having the impression of the right foot of our Saviour, was placed

in it; the impression of the left foot still exists in a chapel, and is visible even at the present day; as the Abbe Geramb (afterwards General of the Trappists) asserts in his travels to Jerusalem, saying: "In regard to the impression of the left foot, there is no doubt of its existence, although worn out by the innumerable kisses of pilgrims during so many centuries, and by some pious thefts which even close watching could not prevent."

The infidelity of our times may ridicule this, and other traditions which, although not dogmas, are deserving of belief, on account of the men who have corroborated them, but we can not be led astray when our Saviour has expressly left the gift of miracles to His Church, as a proof of her truth and divine origin.

## SUNDAY WITHIN THE OCTAVE OF THE ASCENSION.

CALLED ALSO

"EXAUDI SUNDAY."

INTROIT OF THE MASS.—Ps. 26.

"Hear, O Lord, my voice, with which I have cried to thee, alleluia. My heart hath said to thee, I have sought thy face; thy face, O Lord, will I seek; turn not away thy face from me, alleluia, alleluia. The Lord is my light and my salvation, whom shall I fear?"

These words of David, spoken with confidence in divine assistance, are repeated by the Church on this day as a fervent prayer to the Son of God, who ascended into heaven, asking at the same time for the grace of the Holy Ghost, whose descent we celebrate on next Sunday, so that this day may be considered as a preparation for Pentecost.

PRAYER.

O Almighty and everlasting God, grant us ever to entertain a devout affection towards Thee, and to serve Thy majesty with a sincere heart. Through Christ.

EPISTLE.—1 Peter 4: 7-11.

"Dearly beloved: Be prudent, and watch in prayers. But before all things have a constant mutual charity among yourselves: for charity covereth a mul-



titude of sins. Using hospitality one towards another without murmuring. As every man hath received grace, ministering the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. If any man speak, let him speak as the words of God. If any man minister, let him do it as of the power which God administereth: that in all things God may be honored through Jesus Christ, our Lord."

This Epistle contains an admonition of St. Peter to the faithful to practice those most beautiful Christian virtues of prudence in life, watchfulness, and perseverance in prayer, love and kindness towards one another, faithful use of divine grace, and scrupulous fulfilment of our obligations.

GOSPEL.—John 15 : 26 ; 16 : 1-4.

"At that time, Jesus said to his disciples: When the Paraclete cometh whom I will send you from the Father, the Spirit of truth, who proceedeth from the Father, he shall give testimony of me. And you shall give testimony, because you are with me from the beginning. These things have I spoken to you, that you may not be scandalized. They will put you out of the synagogues: yea, the hour cometh that whosoever killeth you, will think that he doeth a service to God. And these things will they do to you, because they have not known the Father, nor me. But these things I have told you, that when the hour of them shall come, you may remember that I told you."

In the Gospel of to-day, which also forms a part of the last discourse of Christ, He speaks to His disciples of the effects of the Paraclete or Comforter, the Holy Ghost, and for this reason the Church recounts on this day the above Gospel.

Our Saviour calls the Holy Ghost the *Spirit of Truth*, that is, the spirit of God, because God alone is *Truth*. (Ps. 30 : 6; John 14 : 6.) He further says, that the Holy Ghost "*proceedeth from the Father*," not as if He proceeded from the Father alone, and not at the same time from the Son; for as our Saviour, according to His own word, is one with the Father (John 10 : 30), and has all things whatsoever the Father has, (John 16 : 15) the truth of the Catholic doctrine is thereby evidently proved, that the Holy Ghost proceeds from the Father and the Son. "This Spirit of Truth," continues Christ, "shall give testimony of Him." This testimony, that Jesus Christ was in truth the Son of God and the Redeemer of the world, the Holy Ghost communicated to single persons, as for instance to the Apostles, by inspiration and enlightenment; as also by the wonderful effects produced before the eyes of the world. But the Apostles were also to give testimony of Jesus, which they did by fearlessly promulgating His doctrine, by the example of their lives, confirming the doctrine they preached; by their miracles, showing thereby the truth of their teachings; by firmly confessing their belief

in Christ before the tribunals of law, and finally by sealing the truth of the doctrine of Christ with their own blood. The persecutions which they would meet on account of Him, and martyrdom which they would suffer, He also foretold on this occasion in order to prepare them for their fate, so that they might not become disheartened, or be scandalized in Him or His teachings. He at the same time explained to His disciples why they would be so cruelly persecuted by the world, the Jews and heathen, because those men, enveloped in incurable spiritual blindness, would have no true knowledge of God, and therefore misled by prejudices, and considering darkness to be light, and light darkness, would believe it not only just and right to regard the faithful servants of God and teachers of truth as seducers, as wicked men, and false prophets, but also to persecute them, and put them to death, a course which has been continued until this day, since the words of the Evangelist have remained true in all times: "And the light shineth in darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it. He, the Son of God, was in the world, and the world was made by Him, and the world knew Him not." (John 1: 5-10.)

St. Augustine, the great doctor of the Church, in explaining the above words of our Saviour, says: "Our Lord Jesus Christ, in the words which He spoke to His disciples after having instituted the Holy Eucharist, and in view of His approaching passion, since He was to return, and to have them in His bodily presence in order to be with them for ever until the end of time, admonished them to suffer willingly the persecutions of the wicked, whom He called the WORLD; from which world He chose His disciples, so that they might know that they had only become what they were through the grace of God, and not by means of their own corrupt nature; then He points to the Jews as His and their persecutors, in order that it may be known to all, that those who persecute the Saints belong to the wicked world. He speaks of the Jews because they knew Him not, nor by whom He had been sent; that is, Him who was sent, and Him by whom He was sent. He continued, saying, that the law might be fulfilled, 'They have treated me with an unjust hatred.' (Ps. 34: 19; 68: 5.) In conclusion He adds: 'When the Paraclete cometh, whom I will send you from the Father, the Spirit of Truth, who proceedeth from the Father, he shall give testimony, because you are with me from the beginning.' How are these words connected with the following: 'Now they have both seen and hated both me and my Father, but that the word may be fulfilled which is written in their law: They hated us without cause.'" (John 15: 24, 25.) Perhaps because the Comforter, who appeared as the Spirit of Truth, convinced with open testimony those who saw and heard? Yes, He converted through His revelation some of those who had seen and still hated.

## FEAST OF SS. PHILIP AND JAMES.

(May 1.)

(ACCORDING TO BAYERLE.)

THE feast of these two Apostles is celebrated on one day, because their relics were translated on the first of May to the church of the Holy Apostles in Rome.

St. Philip, one of the first followers of Christ, was born at Bethsaida in Galilee and always showed special love and attachment to His Master. After the ascension, St. Philip preached the Gospel for a time in Judea, amidst the most violent persecutions and opposition on the part of the Jews; he then went to the northern part of Asia-Minor. After suffering great hardships, he succeeded by his untiring zeal in completely overthrowing the temples of the idols, and in converting many to the true faith. He is said to have visited the southern part of Russia, where he preached the Gospel in company with St. Bartholomew. He finally taught the truths of Christianity at Hieropolis in Phrygia, where, by order of the heathen priests, he was cast into prison, cruelly scourged, then placed upon the cross with his head down, and afterwards stoned to death. According to Eusebius, the historian, he suffered martyrdom in the year fifty-four after Christ, and in the seventy-seventh of his age.

INTROIT OF THE MASS.—2 Esdras 9 : 27.

“In the time of their tribulation they cried to thee, O Lord, and thou heardest them from heaven. Alleluia, alleluia. Rejoice in the Lord, ye just; praise becometh the upright.”

As the Lord, according to the words of Esdras had in the old law shown mercy to His people after they had sinned, but returned to Him in penance, and as He sent holy persons to deliver them from the hands of their enemies; so in the new law He sends His chosen servants, the Apostles and other disciples, to His people, to save them from the far greater danger of losing their souls, and to lead them into the path of eternal salvation.

PRAYER.

O God, who givest us joy by the annual solemnity of Thy Apostles Philip and James, grant, we beseech Thee, that we may be instructed by the example of those in whose merits we rejoice. Through Christ.

EPISTLE.—Wisdom 5 : 1-5.

“The just shall stand with great constancy against those that have afflicted



them, and taken away their labors. These seeing it, shall be troubled with terrible fear, and shall be amazed at the suddenness of their unexpected salvation, saying within themselves, repenting, and groaning for anguish of spirit: These are they whom we had some time in derision, and for a parable of reproach. We fools esteemed their life madness, and their end without honor. Behold how they are numbered among the children of God, and their lot is among the saints."

The wise man depicts in a few expressive words the glorious destiny, which one day will be awarded to the just, the faithful servants of God, in contrast to the terrible fate and inexpressible despair of their former persecutors, and of the wicked in general. The Church, therefore, very appropriately proposes to us this passage of the holy Scriptures on the feast of these two Apostles, who also suffered ignominy and persecution from the wicked, but who now triumph over their enemies.

GOSPEL.—John. 14 : 1-13.

"At that time Jesus said to his disciples: Let not your heart be troubled. You believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house there are many mansions. If not, I would have told you, that I go to prepare a place for you. And if I shall go, and prepare a place for you: I will come again, and will take you to myself, that where I am, you also may be. And whither I go you know, and the way you know. Thomas saith to him: Lord, we know not whither thou goest; and how can we know the way? Jesus saith to him: I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No man cometh to the Father, but by me. If you had known me, you would without doubt have known my Father also: and from henceforth you shall know him, and you have seen him. Philip saith to him: Lord, show us the Father, and it is enough for us. Jesus saith to him: So long a time have I been with you, and have you not known me? Philip, he that seeth me, seeth the Father also. How sayest thou, show us the Father? Do you not believe, that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? The words that I speak to you, I speak not of myself. But the Father who abideth in me, he doth the works. Believe you not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? Otherwise believe for the very works' sake. Amen, amen, I say to you, he that believeth in me, the works that I do, he also shall do, and greater than these shall he do: because I go to the Father. And whatsoever you shall ask the Father in my name, that I will do."

In this Gospel, our Saviour speaks of His divinity to His disciples, at the same time consoling them on account of His approaching departure. St. Augustine, in speaking of the first words of the Gospel, says: "That the Apostles as

men may not fear death, He (our Lord) consoled them by giving testimony of His divinity. You believe in God, said our Lord, believe also in me. He meant to say, that it is logically right, that you, believing in God, should also believe in me, which would not follow, if Christ were not God." The holy Pope Leo the Great makes the following beautiful remark on the words: I am the way, and the truth, and the life, saying: "Christ is the way of a holy life, the truth of divine doctrine, and the life of eternal happiness."

St. Augustine clearly defines the promise made by Christ, which at first sight seems to be very strange, when He said, that the Apostles believing in Him would do even greater things than He Himself had done, saying: "Which are those greater works? Perhaps, because the shadow of St. Peter cured the sick?" (Acts 5 : 15.) It is certainly more astonishing that a mere shadow should effect a cure, than that the hem of a garment should. (Matt. 9 : 20 ; 14 : 36.) Our Saviour understood by those words rather their effects; for He said: 'The Father who abideth in me, he doth the work,' He meant the words spoken by Him, which converted the disciples alone. Not only a few, but even a great many among the heathens believed the teachings of the Apostles, and where one rich youth went off, saddened after hearing the words Christ had spoken to him, many followed the counsel given them by the Apostles. Those words, however, were not addressed to the Apostles alone; for the belief in Christ is the work of Christ, which He effects within us, but not without our own co-operation, so that from being sinners, we become just men.

"And this we may call a greater work than even the creation of heaven and earth; for they will perish, while the salvation and justification of the elect will remain for ever."

Not in vain, therefore, does our Saviour give His going to the Father as a reason for the great wonders which His disciples would effect; for after perfecting the work of redemption, after being glorified in His heavenly kingdom, His divine omnipotence should, for the successful propagation of His kingdom upon earth, be gloriously revealed by the many miracles wrought in His name. Our Lord also wished to confirm the faith and confidence of His disciples by adding the promise, that their prayers made in His name, should always be heard.

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## FEAST OF THE INVENTION OF THE HOLY CROSS.

(May 3.)

THE HOLY CROSS, the instrument of our redemption and as it were the Altar, upon which the God-man consummated the great bloody sacrifice for the sins of the whole world, is the most venerable relic, which we possess. According to the Jewish custom it was undoubtedly buried on Golgotha after the crucifixion of our Lord, and was hidden for about three centuries, so that the faithful could not find the place where it was concealed; every trace of it even was lost, since the Pagans out of hatred to the Christians had done all that they could, to prevent their recognizing the place where our Lord had been crucified. Adrian, the Roman Emperor, about one hundred years after Christ had the the holy sepulchre covered with stones and earth, and built over it a temple in honor of the Venus; upon Calvary however he erected a statue of Jupiter, so that upon that venerable spot, where the Son of God offered up to His heavenly Father the great and atoning sacrifice for the salvation of mankind, the heathens offered sacrifices to their impure and wicked gods. During the bloody persecution that raged for almost three hundred years against the Church the Christians did not think of searching for the cross: but when by the conversion of the Emperor Constantine to the Catholic Church the persecutions ceased and the doctrine of Jesus Christ crucified was publicly recognized as the established religion, it was determined if possible to find the Holy cross and preserved it for the veneration of the Faithful. It is to the mother of Constantine, the Empress Helena, that we are indebted for the finding of this most precious of all relics.

In the year 326, animated by a fervent desire to visit the Holy places, to perform her devotions at the sepulchre of our Lord, and especially to search for the cross of Christ, St. Helena although advanced in years, proceeded to Palestine. She made inquiries about the cross, but could learn nothing, except that it must have been buried near the place of the crucifixion and consequently near the holy sepulchre. She demolished the temple of Venus, removed the rubbish and had the ground excavated and soon discovered the holy sepulchre, near which she found in a separate tomb three crosses (for the two crosses of the two thieves, who were crucified with our Saviour, had also been buried there) three of the nails, with which our Lord had been fastened to the cross, with Pilate's inscription, written upon a piece of board, which however was detached from the cross.

The true cross of our Lord was now to be identified, but it was very doubtful, which of the three it was, since the inscription, (the only reliable proof) had been taken off. In this uncertainty St. Macarius, Bishop of Jerusalem, who together with St. Helena superintended the search for the Holy Cross, ordered



prayers to be said, that Almighty God might make known to Christians the Cross of His only begotten Son. Enlightened by divine grace and filled with a firm belief, he in the presence of the empress and of a great many people caused a noble lady of Jerusalem who was at the point of death, to be touched with the two crosses, which had first been discovered; this was done without producing any effect upon her; but when the dying woman was touched with the third cross, her health was immediately restored; even a dead person, who was touched with this cross revived at once. Thus by an open miracle of the divine omnipotence was the Holy Cross found, to the great joy of the Christians, who at once showed their veneration for the precious relic. The empress then sent to her son, the Emperor Constantine, a part of the Holy Cross and the three nails; the largest part of the cross however she had set in gold and precious stones, and gave it for preservation to St. Macarius, who afterwards exposed it for veneration in the magnificent temple of the Holy Sepulchre, built by the Emperor Constantine. A third part of the Cross the empress gave to the church which she had built at Rome under the title of the church "of the Holy Cross of Jerusalem," where that relic can be seen even at the present day. Small particles of the Holy Cross may be found almost in every part of the world and are held by the Faithful in great veneration, so that the cross, formerly a sign of ignominy and an instrument of a disgraceful punishment has now through the death of our Redeemer, become throughout the world an object of pious veneration to all Christians.

INTROIT OF THE MASS.—Gal. 6.

"But it behooves us to glory in the cross of our Lord, Jesus Christ, in whom is our salvation, life, and resurrection, by whom we are saved and delivered. Alleluia, alleluia. May God have mercy on us and bless us; may he cause the light of his countenance to shine upon us, and may he have mercy on us. (Ps 56.) Glory be to the Father."

These words of the Apostle, in which he admonishes us to seek our only glory in the Cross of Christ, upon which our Saviour attained for us the redemption of sin, salvation, and life, and the hope of our future glorious resurrection, the Church now proposes to us, and invites us at the same time in the words of the royal prophet, to implore God for grace and mercy through the merits of Christ crucified.

PRAYER.

O God, who in the remarkable finding of the saving cross, didst revive the miracles of Thy passion, grant that by the price of the wood of life, we may obtain the suffrages of life eternal. Who livest and reignest.

## The Epistle is the same as on Palm Sunday.

GOSPEL.—John 3 : 1-15.

“At that time, there was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews. This man came to Jesus by night, and said to him: Rabbi, we know that thou art come a teacher from God: for no man can do these signs which thou dost, unless God be with him. Jesus answered, and said to him: Amen, amen I say to thee, unless a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. Nicodemus saith to him: How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter a second time into his mother’s womb, and be born again? Jesus answered: Amen, amen I say to thee, unless a man be born again of water and the Holy Ghost, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh: and that which is born of the Spirit, is spirit. Wonder not, that I said to thee, you must be born again. The Spirit breatheth where he will; and thou hearest his voice, but thou knowest not whence he cometh or whither he goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit. Nicodemus answered, and said to him: How can these things be done? Jesus answered, and said to him: Art thou a master in Israel, and knowest not these things? Amen, amen, I say to thee, that we speak what we know, and we testify what we have seen, and you receive not our testimony. If I have spoken to you earthly things, and you believe not: how will you believe if I shall speak to you heavenly things? And no man hath ascended into heaven, but he that descended from heaven, the Son of man who is in heaven. And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the desert, so must the Son of man be lifted up: that whosoever believeth in him, may not perish, but may have life everlasting.”

Nicodemus, of whom mention is made in to-day’s Gospel, was one of the Pharisees and belonged to the great council of the Jews, but was not rooted in prejudice, like the most of the Pharisees, for the miracles wrought by our Saviour had convinced him of the divine mission of Christ. Not satisfied with having heard and seen Him in public, and untiring in his search for truth, he sought private instruction from our Lord Himself, who taught him the first and chief conditions necessary for obtaining the kingdom of heaven, that is, the necessity of REGENERATION IN WATER AND THE HOLY GHOST, IN THE SACRAMENT OF BAPTISM. Our Lord calls baptism regeneration, because man, deprived of sanctifying grace through original sin, and therefore spiritually dead, receives this means of salvation, the spiritual life of the soul. For this reason those who were baptized, are called in the holy Scriptures “a new creation. (2 Cor 5 : 17.)

The necessary condition for this of spiritual regeneration in WATER and the HOLY GHOST, required by our Lord, has according to the Holy Fathers, a sublime and at the same time a most mysterious meaning. In the history of

the creation, water appears to have been the first element created by the Almighty, constituting as it were the element from which the world was to be drawn; for we read in the history of the creation: "And the spirit of God moved over the waters," (Gen 1 : 2,) meaning, according to the interpretation of the Holy Fathers, that every thing was created from it. Water is therefore not only the best emblem, but also the most proper element for the new creation, that is, for the spiritual regeneration of man. Water is not only the emblem but also the element of purification, and is therefore very properly applied to the spiritual renovation of man, with which he is to be cleansed from sin, and sanctified as a new creature. St. Cyril says: "As a man consists of two substances, of a body and of a soul, so must he be born again in Christ of two things, referring to the two substances. The HOLY GHOST sanctifies the SPIRIT OF MAN, and the WATER, sanctified by the Holy Ghost, purifies the body."

Our Saviour then remarks to Nicodemus (who wondered at the necessity of man being born again) that no one should be scandalized if this spiritual renovation was not seen; for it was not to be effected in an outward and visible manner, but inwardly and imperceptively, like "the coming wind," which produces great results without being visibly seen by any one.

Our Saviour after having stated to Nicodemus, that SPIRITUAL REGENERATION was the first condition necessary for entering into the kingdom of heaven, adds the second, BELIEF IN HIM, THE SON OF GOD, who by His death upon the cross had redeemed the world and reconciled it with His heavenly Father. Christ then speaks of the *brazen serpent*, erected in the desert for the salvation of the people, as an emblem of His own exaltation upon the cross, by which all men should be saved from ruin.

The Israelites in the desert disheartened by the difficulties they encountered, had murmured against God and Moses, and reproached the latter for having brought them out of Egypt. As a punishment the Lord sent poisonous, or, according to the holy scriptures, fiery serpents among them of whose bite many died. They then came to Moses and besought him to implore Almighty God to avert this horrible plague. When Moses prayed for his people, the Almighty said: "Make a brazen serpent and set it up for a sign; whosoever being struck shall look on it, shall live." (Numbers 21 : 8.) In the same manner mankind on account of its opposition and disobedience to God, fell a prey to the hellish serpent, thereby bringing eternal death upon all; but the bite of the serpent is healed by looking at the Godman elevated upon the cross, obtaining for all men eternal life.

On this subject St. Chrysostom says: "Do you see the harmony between the emblem and the truth? The Jews escaped death, but only temporal death, the Faithful however escape eternal death; the brazen serpent set up healed the bite of the natural serpent,—Christ crucified heals the wounds inflicted by the spiritual serpent; those were healed, who saw the brazen serpent with the



eyes of their body,—now all renounce sin who look upon the cross with the eyes of the spirit; the brass was made in the figure of a serpent,—the body of the Lord was formed by the spirit. In the desert a serpent killed and a serpent cured,—in the same manner did death bring ruin upon us, but through death also came salvation. The poisonous serpent was filled with death,—the healing serpent was free from poison; and it is the same case with us—death which brought ruin, had sin, just as the serpent had poison,—the death of our Lord however was free from sin, as was the brazen serpent free from poison.”

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## LIVES OF THE SAINTS.

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### ST. JAMES.

(May 1.)

“Slander.”

THERE were two Apostles called James; the elder was the brother of the Evangelist St. John; the younger, whose memory the Church celebrates to-day, was a cousin of our Saviour, and for that reason the latter is in the holy Scriptures often called “THE BROTHER OF THE LORD,” for it was customary among the Jews at that time, to call such near relatives brothers. We are told by St. Jerome, that the Lord recommended the Apostle James to take care of his mother’s children, that is the Christian community of Jerusalem, and he was therefore chosen Bishop and remained in Jerusalem, when the rest of the Apostles left for other countries, in order to proclaim the Gospel. His life was so entirely blameless, that even the Jews could not but esteem him. His manner of living had always been most pure and rigid; he never drank wine, never bathed or anointed himself, as was and still is the general custom in the East; he ate meat only at the time of Passover when it was required by a religious law and always went barefooted and clad in a linen garment. Although as a Christian, exempt from the burdensome laws of Judaism, he nevertheless kept them faithfully, partly because he wished no relief, and partly, that he might not give offence to those who were from their youth accustomed to obey the old law, but who had become Christians.

How powerful were his prayers with God was made manifest at the time of a great drought; he only raised his hands in prayer up to heaven, and forthwith it began to rain.

On account of his exceedingly virtuous character he was surnamed "THE JUST," not only by the Christians, but even by the Jews, and with the latter he enjoyed the rare privilege of visiting the part of the temple, reserved especially for the priests, and whenever they saw him, they vied with one another in paying him homage and in kissing the border of his garment. We may imagine therefore how great the veneration for this Apostle must have been on the part of the Christians, since St. Paul calls him in his Epistle "A PILLAR OF THE CHURCH," and he was the first who was informed by Peter of his wonderful deliverance from prison.

The Jewish priests were highly incensed that the number of Christians daily increased in Jerusalem, and they especially hated James, to whose zeal for Christ they slightly ascribed the growth of Christianity. They were in fact only prevented by the Roman governor from persecuting the newly converted Christians and they were also forbidden to pronounce and execute any sentence of death upon them; but they made use of the first favorable opportunity to accomplish their wicked designs. The Roman governor Festus was dead and his successor had not yet arrived from Rome; during this interval the High-priest, ANANUS, the son of the renowned ANNAS, a resolute and passionate man, assembled a Jewish tribunal and summoned several Christians to appear before it, among them the Apostle JAMES. We have no detailed account of the proceedings of this arbitrary tribunal, but we know that James was led to the pinnacle of the temple and there told to disavow his Christian faith in the presence of the great multitude of people, who had assembled around the temple at the Passover. The people, recognizing him, called out to him: "Tell us, thou just one, what must we think of Jesus the crucified? We will believe what thou sayest!" James replied in a loud voice: "Jesus, of whom you speak, is now seated at the right hand of the Highest Majesty as the Son of God, and will come hereafter upon the clouds of heaven." And many people were converted to the faith by these words of the holy man, so that they sang, Hosanna to the Son of God. But the Scribes and Pharisees exclaimed full of anger: "Even he, the just one, has been blinded," and some of them ascended into the temple and threw him from the pinnacle. The fall however did not kill him, and he rose on his knees and prayed, that God might forgive his enemies. They then instigated each other to kill him, and therefore began to stone him, until a workman with a club gave him the fatal blow on his head. On the very place where James died he was buried and his reputation for sanctity even after his death was so great, that the Christians were permitted to erect a monument to him, which remained there until Jerusalem was destroyed. The destruction of the city itself was regarded by many Jews as a punishment for the murder of so just a man. James died the death of a martyr in the year 62 after Christ.

There are only two classes of beings, whose words we may regard as issuing



from the mouth of God and in whom the Holy Ghost clearly and distinctly reflects and manifests Himself. The one comprises such persons as have led a holy life and died in perfect peace with God; such purified souls already show forth the light of eternity, and their words are tinged with the bright dawn of another world.

The other class is made up of the Apostles, who for years lived in constant intercourse with our Saviour, and who were then endowed with the miraculous gifts of the Holy Ghost. The words addressed by them to the Christian communities, and which divine providence has preserved for all time, are certainly as true as if coming direct from the mouth of God. Thus we see, that St. Catharine of Sienna uttered the same truth, which the Apostle whose memory we commemorate to-day, urges the Christians to practice. This truth must therefore possess a divine certainty, for we have been twice assured of it. We are told that St. Catharine, when she felt the approach of death, spoke most impressingly to those who surrounded her death-bed, and in one of her last exhortations she expressed herself thus: "He who will obtain a good conscience, must be careful never to judge his neighbor or to speak ill of his brother's actions." In the epistle of James we read thus: "The tongue is a little member and boasteth great things. Behold how small a fire what a great wood it kindleth! And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity. The tongue is placed among our members, which defileth the whole body. By it we bless God and the Father, and by it we curse men, who are made after the likeness of God. Out of the same mouth proceedeth blessing and cursing." (James 3 : 5; 6 : 9, 10.)

It is indeed surprising, how few persons abstain from indulging in uncharitable judgments and slander, and in this connection we find the saying of Christ verified: "Narrow is the gate and strait is the way that leadeth to life; and few there are that find it." (Matt 7 : 14.) If we can not oblige, and accustom ourselves never to repeat the bad things we see or hear of our fellow-men, except it be done with a Christian purpose, then will all our efforts to save our soul be ineffectual. Even if what we say is true of a person who is not present, our speaking of it is the surest sign, that we are without charity; for we do to our neighbor, what we would not wish to have done to ourselves or to our friends. It is not less true, that we tempt those, in whose presence we commit the sin of slander, to repeat or at least to listen to the slander with malignant joy. St. Bernard therefore says: "Satan has his seat upon the tongue of the slanderer, and in the ear of him who listens to slander." By speaking ill of our neighbor, we in fact scatter also the seed of evil, for we contribute thereby to the spread of bad example, and we sometimes prevent thereby the wrong-doer from repenting, for knowing himself already to be in bad repute and judged by us, he grows more careless and sinks deeper and deeper in his sins. To our account therefore will be charged all the evil consequences of slander, offences, mortification,

enmity, and the false exaggerations that are generally added to the original slander, by those who repeat the slander.

Resolve, therefore, dear reader, never to speak ill of your neighbor and show your regard for St. James, whose feast we celebrate to-day, by endeavoring with energy and perseverance to remain faithful to this good resolution. Review the days of your past life and see how many sins you have committed by means of a "WICKED TONGUE;" take pains to repair the wrong you have done, as much as possible, but especially by trying to keep other persons from indulging in slander and by defending those who are slandered or spoken ill of in your presence.

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## ST. ATHANASIUS.

(May 2.)

"Suffering for Christ."

ST. GREGORY NAZIANZEN, in his panegyric on St. Athanasius, says that his faith was so true and pure that the faith of every one could be measured by that of St. Athanasius, and that his virtue was so perfect, that to praise St. Athanasius, was to praise virtue itself. His reward in heaven, however, on account of other reasons, may even be greater than is the reward of those who possessed as much faith, and who were as virtuous as he. How this saying is to be understood will be shown in his life.

Athanasius was in the year three hundred after Christ Bishop of Alexandria, the capital of Egypt, at that time one of the greatest and most important cities of the Roman empire, and containing about a million of inhabitants. The times however were exceedingly dangerous to the existence and prosperity of the Catholic Church; for a priest, named Arius, had started and propagated the false doctrine that Christ was not God, but only the first and most excellent of all creatures. This heresy struck at the very root of Christianity, because, according to it, God did not sacrifice His own Son for us, but only a mere creature. This doctrine was very zealously spread among the people and clergy; popular songs were even written, in which the heresy was proclaimed—in fact it spread about like wild fire, and many countries were infected by the poisonous doctrine. St. Athanasius may rightly be called the sword wherewith the Lord defended His Church against the powers of hell, in other words against the Arian heresy. By his powerful words and writings, the firmness of his character, and his stead-

fastness in suffering, St. Athanasius fought and conquered. At the celebrated council of Nice, in the year three hundred and twenty-five, several hundred Bishops, among them Athanasius, examined and condemned the doctrine of Arius. The emperor Constantine, influenced by his sister, was prepossessed in favor of Arius, and he ordered Bishop Athanasius to receive Arius into the communion of the Church, but the holy Bishop refused to submit to the command of the emperor, as he would have sinned against his convictions by being in communion with a heretic who denied the divinity of Christ. The Arians, therefore, falsely accused him of being one of the conspirators against the emperor, so that he was obliged to justify himself in the presence of the latter, and he did it with so much success that the emperor called him "a man after the heart of God, a truly venerable Bishop." The enemies of St. Athanasius and of the Catholic Church then devised a still more wicked plan. Arsenius, a heretical priest, had been compelled to flee on account of several offences he had committed; they bribed him to keep himself concealed, and spread the rumor that Athanasius had murdered him in order to use his body for the purposes of magic. To give the rumor a greater appearance of truth, they showed a hand which they had cut off from a corpse, asserting it to be the hand of the murdered Arsenius. This accusation was also brought before the emperor, and Athanasius was summoned to appear before the tribunal of Antioch, but he was able to produce testimony that Arsenius was still alive, in the enjoyment of full health, and living in the lower part of Egypt. The emperor, therefore, dismissed the complaint, and threatened with severe punishment any one who should again bring such slanderous charges before him. The heretic Bishops, nevertheless, did not desist from their wicked designs, and it was their determination to use every means in their power to do away with their strongest opponent, so that they could propagate their false doctrine without hindrance. They not only persisted in their former slander, but also accused Athanasius of having threatened to prevent the importation of grain from Alexandria to the city of Constantinople, where the emperor at that time resided. This accusation the emperor believed, and in his rage, without listening to a word in his defence, he banished the Bishop to the city of Treves in Germany. St. Athanasius, thus separated from his flock and his native city, was forced to set out upon what was then a very long and perilous journey, from Egypt to Treves, from the Nile to the Moselle. In consequence of his absence, the faction of Arius grew so strong, that the Bishop of Constantinople was likewise threatened with exile from his See, if he would not receive Arius into the communion of the Church. In vain were all his protestations and efforts; the only recourse left to him was to supplicate God in fervent prayer. The following day was appointed for the reception of Arius, the destroyer of the Christian religion into the communion of the faithful, and with his followers he went in triumph through the streets of the city, to exhibit himself to the people; but it happened that he was obliged to leave his followers



for a moment, and, not returning, they sought for him, and found him dead, his entrails protruding from his body. Instead, however, of looking on this as a terrible judgment from God, the Arians asserted that it had been done by witchcraft.

A year later, 337 after Christ, the emperor Constantine died, and St. Athanasius was then allowed to return, after having lived thirty months in exile. On his arrival in Alexandria he was received with the most triumphant joy, but the enemies of the Catholic faith, knowing him to be the most faithful and powerful opponent of their false doctrine, were already devising how to get rid of him. They accused him again of several crimes, especially of causing factious tumults, and at last convoking a council composed of followers of their heresy, deposed Athanasius from his See, and chose another Bishop from among their own faction.

The successor of Constantine sided with them, and the newly chosen Bishop entered the city by force of arms. The people loudly censured the sentence of exile pronounced against Athanasius, and hastened to the principal church in order to prevent the heretical Bishop from taking possession; but the governor called upon the Jews and Gentiles to assist in wresting the church from the true Catholics. They rushed in, armed with all kinds of weapons; maltreated the Catholics, sacked the church, profaned the sanctuary, and compelled St. Athanasius to flee. The Arian Bishop then used his power to force the Catholics to attend his church, and those priests, men of distinction, matrons, or virgins, who chose to worship God in their houses in preference to being present at the heretical service, were summoned before the tribunal and pitilessly scourged. The Arian Bishop and the governor preferred complaints against Athanasius, had the petition been signed by the Gentiles and heretics, and then sent it to the emperor Constantius, as if coming from, and originating with, the Christian people.

Athanasius, however, had gone to Rome, and Pope Julius, who was fully convinced of the perfect innocence of the exiled Bishop, did all in his power to assist him. As might be expected, the heretical Bishops were not influenced by the letters of the Pope to turn from the error of their ways; and thus, forcibly separated from his flock, St. Athanasius was obliged to remain for three years in Rome. At last, the emperor Constans, who ruled over the western part of the empire, persuaded his brother Constantius, who was the emperor of the eastern portion, to call a general council with the view of restoring order and union in the affairs of the Church. The council was convoked, and one hundred western, and seventy eastern Bishops assembled at Sardis. This council investigated all the charges brought against Athanasius, and found him entirely innocent. The emperor Constantius was then induced to recall the unjustly persecuted Bishop, which he could now do without fearing opposition from the Arians, whose Bishop had been killed in a popular tumult. When St. Athanasius returned to

Alexandria, it was as if the Holy Ghost who dwelt in him had diffused His spirit over the whole city.

Athanasius himself says: "The people in their assemblies animated each other to holy thoughts and deeds. Many single persons who had determined to marry, renounced marriage for the sake of Christ. Many made up their minds to live in pious solitude. Parents exhorted their children to be converted, and many children begged their parents not to prevent them from becoming followers of Christ. Many wives entreated their husbands, and many husbands their wives, to renounce all conjugal intercourse, and to devote themselves to the service of the Lord. Many widows and orphans, who had formerly suffered from want, were now fed and clothed in consequence of the glowing zeal of the people. There was such holy emulation in the desire to do good, that every family, and every house resembled a temple on account of the piety of their members, and their earnest wish to please God."

Meanwhile a rebellion had broken out against the emperor, and Athanasius called upon his community to remain faithful to their legitimate ruler. After the suppression of the rebellion, the Arians accused him of having sided with the rebels, and brought also several other slanderous accusations against him. The emperor, who greatly favored the Arians, assembled a synod, and being himself present at the meeting, acted with such violence that he drew his sword, in order to force the Bishops to condemn Athanasius. Five thousand soldiers surrounded the church where the Bishop had sought refuge; their arrows came flying through the windows of the church, and, when commanded to attack the church, they rushed in with drawn swords. Athanasius refused to fly, but several monks forcibly led him away, and protected him from the rage of his assailants. Later he escaped to the desert, but even there the satellites of the emperor lay in wait for him. By means, however, of messengers and letters, he continued his intercourse with his flock, and thus endeavored to conform their fidelity.

Constantius, the principal supporter of the Arians, died in the year three hundred and sixty-two, and his successor, Julian, who hated the Christians in general, thought that the best way to injure Christianity would be to tolerate both the Arian and Catholic Bishops, and he therefore recalled all those in exile. Thus Athanasius was also enabled to return to Alexandria; but the wicked design of Julian to increase the discord among the Christians was not fulfilled; on the contrary, through the wise and truly Christian course pursued by Athanasius, not only did many apostates return to the Catholic Church, but Gentiles also were converted to Christ. When Julian was informed of this, he determined to put Athanasius to death, and the latter was again compelled to fly, and conceal himself in the desert.

The persecuted Bishop had once prophetically compared Julian to a dark cloud that would soon disappear, and in fact he was shortly after killed in battle.

His successor, the emperor Jovian, was a very pious Catholic, who had the highest esteem for Athanasius, and he, with his own hand, wrote a letter to Athanasius, inviting him to return to his See.

During his reign, the Arians tried several times to accuse Athanasius of various crimes, but Jovian was too prudent and just, either to believe or to listen to their slanders. Jovian died eight months after his accession to the throne, and his successor Valens, a reckless Arian, again persecuted the Catholic Bishops. By his order, a ship was burned that had eighty Catholic priests on board, and the Governor of Alexandria was commanded to search every church, in order to find Athanasius; but he had already left the city. The people of Alexandria however became so incensed at the exile of their beloved Bishop, that the Emperor, fearing a revolt, permitted Athanasius to return.

After having been five times exiled, he was now to remain undisturbed in the possession of his See, and as a very stormy day is often succeeded by a quiet evening, the crimson rays of the setting sun promising a still more beautiful morn, so also did Athanasius enjoy for several years before his death, peaceful rest, and undisturbed happiness.

Thus Athanasius not only lived for forty-six years, during the term of his sacred office, as a perfect Christian and priest, but he was hunted and chased about like a wild beast, nearly all the days of his life. Five times had he to fly, and live in exile, and all for Christ's sake, because he stood firm and defended the true faith of the Catholic Church.

In the Gospel there are many and different promises made as to the manner in which God will reward either this or that good work; for instance: "Blessed are the clean of heart: for they shall see God. Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy." (Matt 5 : 8.)

There is however one particular kind of suffering, the reward of which will be so great, that the Saviour in advance exhorted his disciples to rejoice and exult in it; He says: "Blessed shall you be when men shall hate you, and when they shall separate you, and shall reproach you, and cast out your name as evil, for the Son of man's sake."

"Be glad in that day, and rejoice: for behold, your reward is great in heaven." (Luke 6 : 22.)

We may not be called upon to suffer persecutions for the sake of Christ, as Athanasius was; but yet we have many opportunities given us to suffer for His sake, though in a less degree. If we show ourselves more in earnest in matters of religion than do the generality of Christians, if we receive the Holy Sacraments frequently, and are daily present at the divine Sacrifice of the Mass, if we despise worldly pleasures, and do not listen with satisfaction or obscene songs and language, we are called hypocrites and devotees; if we defend religion when it is insolently attacked, if we say grace at meals, to show veneration for the crucifix, then we may feel certain of being laughed at; but these are as



nothing in comparison with what St. Athanasius had to suffer for Christ's sake. If such trifles frighten us from the performance of our duty, we can scarcely be regarded as Christians ; we should, on the contrary, look upon it as an special honor and as a great gain, if God gives us the opportunity to suffer for His sake, mockery, scorn, slander, persecution or earthly loss. Such suffering is a badge of honor, wherewith the Most High adorns and distinguishes us, and is of immeasurably greater value than are all the badges, crosses, and stars of honor that earthly princes bestow upon their favorites and faithful servants.

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## ST. MAURA.

(May 3.)

"The source of all strength."

BEFORE the Turks had taken possession of the city of Constantinople, the magnificent palace of the Emperor Justinian contained a chapel dedicated to a married couple, SS. Timothy and Maura, his wife, whose memory was every year commemorated on the third of May.

We extract the following incidents concerning St. Maura, from a very old record.

During the persecution of the Christians under Diocletian, a man named Timothy was brought before the tribunal in Egypt, and accused of being a Christian. After every kind of torture had failed to compel him to deny his Saviour, his cruel persecutors determined upon a new plan. Three weeks before being imprisoned, Timothy had married a young woman by the name of Maura. The heathen governor sent for the newly made wife, and ordered her if she did not wish to become a widow, to return home and attire herself in her most attractive dress, and then to go to visit her husband in prison and endeavor to persuade him to offer sacrifice to the gods. Maura who was still full of the spirit of pride, obeyed the commands of the governor but having entered the prison, Timothy exhorted her most impressively to renounce the pomps and vanities of the world, and to follow him in the struggle he was making to obtain the never ending joys of the world to come.

The words of the pious Timothy deeply touched the heart of his youthful wife, but she felt that she did not yet possess the strength necessary for the combat, and when her husband urged her to go to the governor and fearlessly proclaim herself a Christian, she said : " I am afraid that if I see the governor in a rage, and then think of the painful torments that await me, my courage will fail." Maura was then but seventeen years of age.

Before we proceed any further we would entreat you, dear reader, to pause for a moment and to consider if your soul has never been in a state similar to that in which Maura's was then. Have you never been exhorted in a sermon, or has your own conscience never urged you to perform a good work, to adopt a good habit or to renounce a bad one? You knew it to be your duty and the will of God, but you felt that you lacked the courage necessary to accomplish what God and your conscience demanded. Hence so many hate every good example set before them, every kind admonition addressed to them, because by such means their slumbering conscience is awakened, and although they know it to be their duty to amend their lives, they feel themselves destitute of the strength necessary even to make the effort. While in this condition, discord and trouble reigns within them, their minds and souls are in a most disturbed state, without their making the slightest attempt to remedy the evil. In the life of St. Maura, dear reader, we will be enabled to learn, where man in his weakness may find sufficient strength to accomplish good, if he but turn to the source from which flows all that is needful for him either in this world or the next. You will see that the duties and trials imposed upon you by Almighty God, are but trifles, when compared with the torments which the young and lovely Maura was called upon to suffer.

Timothy implored his faint-hearted wife to trust firmly in the Lord Jesus Christ, who would give her courage to bear the tortures with which the governor would endeavor to terrify her, and then falling upon his knees he prayed: "Thou, O God of all grace, who didst assist the three youths in the fiery furnace, who didst protect Daniel in the lion's den, and supported one prophet by the other,—look down, I beseech Thee, upon Thy servant Maura. Thou who didst unite us in the bonds of marriage, separate us not now from Thy holy martyrs, but grant that we may bear in patience every affliction, and even death itself, for Thy sake, and thus confound the enemy by the invincible faith, that we possess in our Lord Jesus Christ."

After this prayer, Maura filled with the Holy Ghost, went to the governor, and declared that even the greatest threats could no longer induce her to be faithless to her Saviour. The governor, seeing that all future efforts on his part would be useless, gave orders to tear the hair from the head of Maura, and after the command had been obeyed, he said: "See, your hair has been dragged out by the roots, yield at once, and spare yourself the many other painful tortures that await you." But Maura only said: "I know now, O governor, that Christ has forgiven me the sin that I committed at your persuasion, you have deprived me of the hair that I wickedly adorned for the purpose of inducing my pious husband to deny his God." Still more enraged by such an answer, the governor commanded her fingers to be cut off. "I thank you also for cutting off my fingers with which I prepared the ornaments of vanity,"—said the heroic Maura—"it was one of my greatest sins, but by the means of your order, I have

expiated it and found forgiveness." Blinded with passion and urged on by Satan, the governor still imagined that he could persuade Maura to deny her God, and he therefore said to her: "Give up your hope in Christ and offer sacrifice to the gods." "I will not sacrifice," replied Maura—"my Lord and Saviour will protect me." "If you do not consent to do as I tell you—said the governor—I will order hot coals to be placed in your mouth." "When the Prophet Isaias saw the Lord seated on His heavenly throne, he accused himself of being a man of unclean words, and a Seraph came and touched his lips with a burning coal, thus cleansing him from his sin. You may therefore order my mouth to be filled with hot coals, and by that means will I also atone for all the sins I have committed by my tongue," replied Maura, in answer to the brutal threat.

We are not told the order was executed, but the governor commanded a vessel to be brought, filled with sulphur and pitch, intending to make Maura inhale the smoke. Even the heathens who stood by remonstrated with him at this cruel proceeding, but Maura, turning to them, said: "Do not care for me, I am not in need of your intercession, for God is my helper and deliverer."

Not even the suffocating fumes of the burning sulphur could make Maura waver, and the governor finally sentenced her to be crucified with her husband. When Timothy and Maura were led to the place of execution, the mother of the latter followed and embraced her, exclaiming: "My daughter, why will you leave your mother? what will become of your rare jewels, of your silver and gold, of your rich dresses, if you die?" "Gold and precious jewels are easily lost, mother—rich garments can be destroyed by moth, beauty can not defy time, and will fade away in old age—but the crown of Jesus Christ is imperishable."

Such was the evangelical answer made by the holy daughter, and tearing herself away from her mother's arms, she approached the cross. The two martyrs were then nailed to it, but several days elapsed before their death took place, and Maura now inspired her husband with courage and firmness, as he had formerly exhorted and inspired her. Both Saints yielded up their spirits to God on the same day.

"Blessed is the man that endureth temptation, for when he hath been proved he shall receive the crown of life, which God hath promised to them that love him." St. James 1: 12.

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## ST. MONICA.

(May 4.)

"The result of incessant prayer."

ON this the fourth of May we find in the Missal a Mass with prayers and lessons especially collected in memory veneration of St. Monica. Its Gospel (Luke 7 : 11-17) reads thus: "And it came to pass, after this, that he went into a city called Naim: and there went with him his disciples, and a great multitude. And when he came nigh to the gate of the city, behold, a dead man was carried out, the only son of his mother: and she was a widow: and much people of the city was with her. And when the Lord saw her, he had compassion on her, and said to her: Weep not. And he came near and touched the bier. (And they that carried it, stood still.) And he said: Young man, I say to thee, arise. And he that was dead, sat up, and began to speak. And he delivered him to his mother. And there came a fear on them all: and they glorified God, saying: That a great prophet is risen up among us: and God hath visited his people. And this rumor of him went forth throughout all Judea, and throughout all the country round about."

Monica had a son, who was endowed with great talents, and from his earliest youth she instructed him in the doctrines of Christianity; but the older he grew, the more did he fill the heart of his mother with apprehension, for all her efforts to bring him up as a good Christian seemed to fail. He gave evidence of great impetuosity of temper, which threatened to stifle and destroy the good resulting from an excellent education, and this impetuosity was equaled only by his ambition to become celebrated for his great acquirements. In his seventeenth year he went to the city of Carthage to perfect himself in his studies, and while there, became acquainted with some Manicheans, whose pernicious heresy he embraced. Monica was at that time a widow, and loved her son with all the fondness of a mother; yet she was such a true Christian, that following the direction given by the Apostle John, (2 John 10) in regard to apostates, she refused to live under the same roof with her son or to eat at the same table.

A truly Christian mother is much more saddened at seeing her child corrupted in soul, than to see him die before her eyes; for if he die only in his body, she is sure of one day reaching him in heaven; but if death attacks his soul, if he walks in the path of infidelity and sin, it will be only by a miracle, by a real resuscitation of his dead soul, that she ever meets him again. St. Monica felt much greater pain at the death of her son's soul than she would have felt at the death of his body. *She wept and prayed incessantly.* We see in to-day's Gospel, that the Lord in His compassion told the widow: "*Weep not,*" and thus also did He speak to St. Monica: "*Weep not,*"—for with the same consoling words did He answer her prayers and tears in a dream and by the mouth

of a Bishop. In her dream she seemed to stand full of sadness and grief upon a long wooden bridge; she saw a youth radiant with beauty approaching, who with a serene and friendly countenance asked her the cause of her tears. She replied, that she bewailed the lost soul of her son; he exhorted her to cease grieving as her son was journeying in the same direction with herself, and looking up she perceived her son standing upon the same bridge.

When Monica related the dream to her son, the interpretation which he placed upon it was, that his mother would be converted to his opinion, and adopt the Manichean heresy; but Monica immediately replied: "That is impossible, because the angel did not say, that *I would be, where you were, but that you would come to me.*" This ready answer made a much deeper impression upon the son, than the communication of the dream itself; but Monica was so comforted by the dream, that she permitted her son to live with her again.

Years passed on without the son giving the least evidence of a change for the better; but the pious widow Monica did not relax her Christian efforts to convert her son by her prayers and tears. Finally God resolved to strengthen and comfort the sorrowful heart of Monica; she asked a learned Bishop to converse with her son on the subject of religion and convince him of his errors; but the Bishop knowing that the young man was vain and full of conceit, anticipated little success from such a course and he said to Monica: "Continue to pray for him, he will soon discover himself the absurdity and wickedness of his heresy." Monica however did not cease entreating the Bishop for that purpose, and he at last said to the afflicted and weeping mother: "Continue to do, what you are doing; *for it is impossible that a son should ever be lost, for whose sake so many tears have been shed.*" Monica was as much consoled at hearing these words, as if they had proceeded from the mouth of God Himself.

Her son had now reached his twenty-ninth year and in his pride resolved to go to Rome as a teacher of eloquence. He did so against the wish of his mother and by doing so added to the bitter grief that already oppressed her heart.

After his arrival in Rome he fell dangerously sick, but having recovered he went to the city of Milan, where St. Ambrose was at that time Bishop.

Filled with a mother's love and perfectly indifferent to the dangers of so distant a journey as was the journey from Africa to Milan, St. Monica followed her son to that city and found him in a very different state of mind from what she expected. His conversations and the intercourse which he had enjoyed with St. Ambrose had such an effect upon him, that he became convinced of the vicious errors of Manicheism; but he was not yet converted to the truth of the Catholic faith. Monica remained for some time in Milan without perceiving in her son any further change; his progress in virtue seemed to be suddenly arrested—he was no longer a Manichean, neither was he a Catholic or true Christian as yet.

The life of St. Monica may be compared to a funeral procession, in which she for years followed the lifeless body of her son; she wept and prayed, and the thought of her son, as one spiritually dead, never left her heart in which it was enclosed as in a coffin. At last He came to the rescue, who had resuscitated the youth of Naim, and who had said: "I am the resurrection and the life!" The fact that St. Anthony and other distinguished men had suddenly renounced the world and its pleasures, in order to devote themselves entirely to God, had been spoken of in the presence of her son and it made a deep impression upon him. "The illiterate rise and take possession of heaven, said he, while we in our cold science care only for the things of this world." He then went into a garden near by, where he burst into bitter tears exclaiming: "How long shall I still say: to-morrow, to-morrow! Why not now? Why shall I not finish my disgrace this very hour? O God, remember not my former transgressions!" And he heard a sweet voice from above, saying: "*Take and read! Take and read!*" He returned to the house, and seeing the Scriptures lying there he opened it, his eye was immediately fixed upon the passage: "Not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and impurities, not in contention and envy. But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh in its concupiscences." (Rom 13 : 13-14.) These words had the same effect, as though God Himself had addressed them to him, and from that moment he became a true and perfect Christian.

Thus did the weeping mother see her dead son resuscitated by the Lord, and he afterwards became a Bishop, and one of the greatest and most celebrated Fathers of the Church—for *the resuscitated son was* ST. AUGUSTINE.

The prayers and tears of Monica were many and long, but their result was great and rich beyond all her hope and imagination; the seed sown in affliction, and watered by tears, brought forth a glorious harvest!

The life of St. Monica shows us how powerful are the prayers sent up by parents to God for their lost or degenerate children, but they must be true Christians like Monica, if they expect their prayers to have the same wonderful effect; for prayer is like the soul from which it ascends, either powerful and acceptable to God, or lame, and without vitality.

Parents, whose hearts are not filled with the spirit of Christ, will not have the confidence necessary for the purpose of addressing an earnest and powerful appeal to God. If it is the fault of parents themselves that their children are without the true faith, or if they have educated them badly, because they themselves did not possess much Christianity, then may they fear that their after prayers will not amend what their former neglect of duty has spoiled.

After Monica had enjoyed the greatest happiness that God could grant her on earth—the conversion of her son—and had seen him following the path in which she walked herself, and one that leads to heaven, her desires on earth were satisfied, her earthly task accomplished. She intended to accompany St.



Augustine back to Africa, and when in Ostia, from which port they wished to embark, she said to him: "My son, I assure you, there is nothing more in this life, that can now give me joy; I know not what I shall do longer upon earth, as the only object for which I desired to live, was to see you before my death embracing Christ, and becoming a true Catholic. God has given me even greater happiness, for He has not only granted me this favor, but also that of seeing you, His servant, despising out of love to Him all temporal goods and advantages. Why, then, shall I remain here longer?" A few days after she had spoken thus, she was taken very ill, and nine days later she yielded up her pure spirit to God.

St. Augustine, when writing to St. Paulina, says: "If the souls of the departed can interest themselves in what is done upon earth, and if they are allowed to speak to us in dreams, then is there surely no night in which my good mother does not visit me. God forbid that she, who has entered upon a more happy life, should have become so indifferent, and so forgetful of me, that she would not come to console me when I am in sorrow, she who loved me with such unspeakable love."

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## ST. PIUS V.

(May 5.)

"Active Life"

THE holy Pope Pius V. was a Dominican friar, and was at one time General of the order. He was made a Bishop by Pope Paul IV., and a year after a Cardinal. After the death of Pope Pius IV., in the year 1565, the great Cardinal St. Charles Borromeo besought all the other Cardinals to vote for Pius V., the Saint whose memory we commemorate to-day.

As he was considered a very rigid man, the majority of the inhabitants of Rome were not much pleased with his appointment; but Pius, hearing of it, said: "With the assistance of God I shall so rule that the people will be more grieved at my going out of the office, than by my entering upon it."

The first act of his administration manifested his prudent and strongmind. It was usual at the coronation of a Pope to throw a certain sum of money among the assembled people, by which custom great disorders sometimes arose, and persons were not unfrequently injured; quite a large sum of money was also employed in the preparation of a splendid banquet to which the Cardinals and foreign ambassadors were invited. Pius discontinued this custom, and used the

money thus saved for charitable purposes. Soon after he had entered upon his holy duties, he insisted that all the prostitutes should be sent out of Rome; but the magistrates evincing a reluctance to execute this order, Pius threatened to leave Rome with the whole papal court, and to make some other city his place of residence. This menace had the desired effect, and by his order those prostitutes who had continued in their sinful life up to the time of their death, were denied a Christian burial. He did all in his power to assist and elevate the tone of public morality by making stringent laws against intemperance, gambling, and all other vices, and declared that he would rather see the revenues of the State diminished than derive an income from such impure sources. Not less earnest was he in his efforts to lessen the burden of his subjects by entirely remitting many taxes and dues, and by reducing others as much as possible; he issued decrees against the common practice of protracting law-suits; never left to others what he thought he could accomplish himself, and always himself examined the important affairs of his administration.

The greatest task, however, which Pius V. assumed, and in executing which he spared neither time nor trouble, was to introduce and put in force in all Catholic countries the decrees of the council of Trent. The numerous defections from the Catholic Church at the so-called Reformation, had made it necessary to prepare and issue new regulations and decrees, in order to check the evil, and also to remove many existing abuses and irregularities. All the Bishops of the Catholic Church were, therefore, summoned to assemble in the city of Trent to hold a council, and what the Bishops after careful deliberation laid down as true and beneficial for the faithful, Pius V. endeavored to carry out. He re-arranged the Missal and Breviary, removed by his regulations all that caused disorder and disturbance in the Church service, by his command, too, distinguished ecclesiastics compiled the Roman catechism, and translated it into several languages. All Catholic countries were called upon to establish schools for the religious instruction of youth; the devotion of the Rosary, introduced by St. Dominic, was recommended; priests were forbidden to be absent from their parishes, and ordered to abstain from gambling and dancing, not to visit taverns and theatres, and, in short, to do nothing that could lower the high dignity of the priesthood. In religious houses, too, better discipline and greater order were thus introduced by his efforts and regulations.

Italy, at that time, was infested with bands of robbers, and while Pius was very rigid in his measures against such criminals and their harborers, he also decreed that the inhabitants of those communities and seignories, within whose limits the robberies were committed, should make good the damage done by the robbers, in order to make them more vigilant for the public safety. He called also upon all European powers to take stringent measures against pirates, and he built fortified towers along the coast as places of refuge, and for the protection of those living near the shore from the attacks of the corsairs.

Thus did Pope Pius endeavor to restore order and safety upon land and water, and not less care did he take to have shipwrecked persons treated humanly, slaves freed, and the cruel combats of wild beasts, a favorite amusement at that time, strictly prohibited.

We find also regulations made by this Pope regarding dowries, intermarriage of relatives, and one by which a physician was forbidden to see a patient the third time unless the Sacraments had been administered to him.

This saintly Pope also reformed the tribunals, instituted a regular inspection of prisons, and punished severely those who carelessly and fraudulently contracted debts. He made new rules in regard to the intercourse between Jews and Christians, partly to protect the latter from suffering any injury in matters of faith, and in order to facilitate the conversion of the former.

His biographer tells us that Pius did so much towards removing abuses, established so many good and beneficial regulations and institutions that an enumeration of all would fill an entire book.

The great interest evinced by the Pope did not extend merely to the welfare of the States belonging to the Church, but embraced whole continents, he sent missionaries to different parts of the world to proclaim to the Gentiles the doctrine of salvation. He was very solicitous to check the progress of the hereditary enemy of Christianity, the Turks, and on that account made great efforts to unite the Spaniards and Venetians, the two powers who at that time were alone able to resist the Turks on the sea. His legates also urgently called upon other princes, the emperor of Germany, the kings of Poland and France, and the Italian dukes for assistance, so that in the celebrated naval action at Lepanto the Christians were enabled to gain a glorious victory over the Turks. With not less energy, exerting all his spiritual power, he sought also to check the spread of Protestantism and other heresies.

Thus were the days of the saintly Pius full of trouble, burdened as he was with important state affairs. Such a life, however, is sometimes most dangerous for the welfare of the soul. It is not only that he who is charged with many important duties, rests under great responsibility if he does not choose the right, but the danger is that, in directing all his thoughts, cares, and energy to such affairs, he may forget to provide for his soul. Pope Pius, however, has shown us that even under the greatest pressure of business we are able to provide for our own salvation; he was not satisfied with interesting himself only in the concerns of the Church, but he acted also according to the words of St. Paul: "I chastise my body, and bring it into subjection; lest, perhaps, when I have preached to others, I myself should become a cast-away." (1 Cor. 9: 27.) Pius V. is generally represented with a crucifix before him; for he was not only in the habit of continually meditating upon the Passion of Christ, but he had also a crucifix always before his eyes upon which were written the words of the Apostle: "God forbid that I should glory but in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ."



(Gal. 6 : 14.) Every morning he prayed with the greatest devotion, and either day said or heard Mass, and his great piety was so well known that, when the Turkish Sultan Soliman besieged the city of Sigeta, he remarked: "I fear not the soldiers nor the weapons of the Christians, but I do fear the prayers of their holy Pope." In the evening he always assembled the members of his household, and recited with them the litany and other prayers; he never let a day pass without saying his rosary, and was heard to say frequently that the troubles, burdens, difficulties and dangers of the Papal office would be insupportable were it not for prayer. He rigidly observed the fasts of the Church, abstained from meat three days of the week, even in sickness. While partaking of his frugal meals, he always had something read to him from a pious book, in order also to nourish the mind, and during Advent and Lent he had sermons frequently preached in the Papal palace, always being himself one of the devout hearers. In order that none of the poor might be forgotten in his charity, he had a book prepared containing their names, and he never went out without taking with him the means of bestowing alms. Not less distinguished was he for the mildness and gentleness of his bearing which did not derogate in the least from his dignity. He was kind and obliging to all, but especially towards the poor, whose petitions he always listened to with great attention, and granted them what they asked whenever he could. These features of his character deserve so much the more praise, since being very passionate by nature, he made the greatest efforts to govern himself. His hatred of flattery was so well known that no one dared to address him in terms of adulation, and when on one occasion a relative of his had been recommended to an office, he said: "He is an honest man, although he never contradicts me." Another of his relatives was dismissed from office, because he denied having committed an illegal act. Pius adhered to the truth, and never made a promise which he did not intend to fulfill. In consequence of his humility he avoided as much as possible all display of pomp; his rooms were most simply furnished, and when entering upon the duties of his high office, he had no new clothes made, but used those of the deceased Pope, his predecessor. On Holy Thursday he faithfully complied with the old Papal custom of washing and kissing the feet of thirteen poor persons.

Thus the holy Pope, although overburdened with affairs of State, did not forget to care for his soul, and all he did was undertaken and carried through out of love, and in honor of God.

May he serve us, dear reader, as a model in providing for the salvation of our souls! How this can and should be done, has been shown in the life of St. Pius, and may best expressed by the words so frequently repeated, and so faithfully acted upon by him: "He who desires to rule others, must begin with himself."

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## ST. JOHN DAMASCENUS.

(May 6.)

"Self-Humiliation."

THE life of Pope Pius V. has shown us the possibility of providing for the salvation of our souls even in the midst of a very busy life, but it also shows us that he used every means in his power to prevent his election to the Pontifical throne, and that he only accepted the dignity because he feared to act in direct opposition to the will of God.

It is beyond all doubt much the best plan for every Christian to avoid, if possible, any position in life that leaves him but little time to take care of his immortal soul, or that engages him too much with the affairs of this world. The life of the Saint whose memory we celebrate to-day, may serve as an illustration of this truth.

Damascus, a city in Palestine, belonged in the eighth century, when St. John lived, to the Saracens, who were of the Mohammedan religion. Although the father of St. John was a Christian, he nevertheless enjoyed the esteem of the Caliph (the title used by the Prince of the Saracens) to such a degree that he conferred upon him a very important office. We must here remark that the Saracens of Damascus were at that time not at all hostile in their conduct towards the Christians, and the father of John employed his wealth and power in endeavoring to ransom Christian captives. On one occasion, when the Saracens, returning from an expedition, brought with them many captives to Damascus, he discovered among them a very learned monk by the name of Kosmos, whom he persuaded to become the instructor of his only son. The pious monk lived in the family of his benefactor for years, and after some time the progress of his pupil became so great that he declared it to be useless for him to continue to teach one who already surpassed him in learning. Kosmos now desired most ardently to return to his convent in order to resume his former manner of life, and the father of John, although he would have preferred keeping with him one who had so greatly benefited his son, granted his wish, but died soon after the learned and holy priest had left Damascus.

The Caliph had been so well satisfied with the manner in which the father had discharged his duties, and his regard for the son was already so great that he conferred upon him an office of even more importance than that held by his father, for he made him Governor of Damascus.

St. John now enjoyed all that the heart of man could desire upon earth. Damascus is situated in one of the most beautiful regions of the world, and offers many attractions as a place of residence. John was wealthy, and most highly esteemed and honored throughout the country; his position as governor gave him great authority, and the opportunity of being very useful to his fel-

low-creatures ; he was left undisturbed in the exercise of his religion, and his office gave him many facilities for benefiting his brothers in the faith. John, however, found it too difficult a task in the position he occupied to labor earnestly for the salvation of his soul, and to serve God as perfectly as he desired to do in his Christian zeal. He, in consequence, resolved to renounce the world and its service, and therefore sent in his resignation as governor. The Caliph endeavored in vain to persuade him to continue in office ; John adhered firmly to his determination, and after he had distributed his wealth equally among the poor, the captives, his relatives, and servants, and endowed several churches with rich legacies, he set out as a poor man upon his pilgrimage to Jerusalem. Thus did John, for the love of Christ, resign a position of great honor, and the possession of immense wealth, to attend more securely to the welfare of his immortal soul.

And now, dear reader, consider for a moment ; are you not living in such a manner that all the noble desires of your soul are stifled by the pressure of too many worldly cares and occupations ; remember that, by being ambitious, by doing too extensive a business, but very little time is left you to take care of your soul, and then reflect, whether it is not better, either to renounce entirely so dangerous an avocation, or to retrench it, so that it may not interfere with the claims of God upon your time. Meditate upon and take to heart the words of holy Scripture : "What doth it profit a man, if he gain the whole world, and suffer the loss of his own soul."

We are told that a cousin of John was appointed to fill his place as governor of Damascus, but that, having incurred the displeasure of the Caliph, he was sent into exile. Is it not better, dear Christian, to renounce voluntarily, and for the sake of God, a position, an office, or an occupation, that exposes you to such a danger, than to be finally disgraced in the eyes of both God and man, as was the cousin of the Saint whose blessed memory we this day celebrate ?

St. John arrived at a place near Jerusalem where a brotherhood of pious men, who had likewise withdrawn from the turmoil of the world, labored with great zeal in order to attain a high degree of perfection. Having declared his intention of joining them, they gave him, according to their custom, a teacher whose duty it was to instruct him in the requirements of a saintly life, for although a learned and pious man, John did not yet possess the wisdom of the Saints. His tutor, who had grown old in his efforts to attain sanctity, exhorted him especially not to follow his own inclinations, to labor only for God, to banish all worldly memories and desires from his mind, not to boast of his learning, not to expect to become perfect at once, but to remember that he was liable to fall into error as long as he lived, and, therefore, to have little confidence in his own judgment ; he also advised him to cease corresponding with his former associates, and to avoid all unnecessary conversation.



John, who but a short time before had been a man possessing great authority, whom many thousands had submissively obeyed, now showed his spiritual guide a childlike obedience, and executed faithfully and willingly the most difficult tasks imposed upon him. He was once told by his teacher to carry all the baskets they had made to the city of Damascus, and there sell them at a very high price; and now was seen standing in the market-place of Damascus, poorly clad and selling baskets, the man who had formerly been governor of the city. He was ridiculed and mocked at on account of the high prices he asked, until a man, who in times past had been one of his servants, but who had meanwhile become wealthy, passed by, and, moved by compassion, without however, showing that he recognized his old master, purchased the baskets at the extravagant price, and John, after this victory over human pride and ambition, returned joyfully to his master.

Upon one occasion he had been persuaded by the urgent solicitations of a friend to employ his talent and skill in writing an epitaph in verse for a person who had lately died, but when the old monk, his teacher, was informed of what he had done, he declared it to be a direct violation of the rule, and immediately banished John from his presence. John now looked upon himself as another Adam, driven out from Paradise by reason of his disobedience, and full of sorrow he applied to the other fathers of the community, begging them to intercede in his behalf. They did so, but the monk was at first inflexible, and when they urged him to enjoin some penance upon his pupil in punishment for his disobedience, he imposed one of such a nature, that none of them expected John to consent to its performance; the condition was, that John, the learned and formerly distinguished man, should clean the cells of all the hermits in the neighborhood.

Astonished and dismayed at the severity of the old man, the monks left and looking upon such a penance as intolerable, they told John that their efforts had been in vain, and hesitated mentioning the only terms upon which he could return, but what was their amazement when they heard John rejoice that his teacher had shown such impartiality towards him, and saw him begin immediately to execute the task prescribed.

When the monk saw John's willingness to obey and the new proof given by him of his deep and earnest humility, he hastened to him, threw his arms around his neck, and exclaimed: "What a hero of holy obedience have I brought forth in Christ;" but John in his modesty, blushed at hearing himself thus praised, and with a heart full of joy, returned with his teacher to their common hut.

Not long after the Mother of God appeared to the old monk in a vision and said to him: "Why do you place obstructions in a source from which proceeds such clear and beautiful water? rather let it flow for the honor of my Son and for the benefit of man." The next morning he communicated to John what had been revealed to him, and commanded him henceforth to let his talent and

learning be made known to the world, and then humbly begged his pardon for having caused him to keep them hidden for such a length of time.

John by his austere and solitary manner of life had now attained a high degree of holiness, he had uprooted from his heart all traces of vanity and worldliness, and was therefore well prepared in spirit to impart to the world the great treasures of his knowledge. He became one of the most celebrated Fathers of the Church, and his writings, numbering about seventeen volumes, are still highly prized by all Catholics, as they contain profound evidences of the truth of Catholic doctrine. Not content with defending with his pen the faith of the Church, he traveled through Palestine, and went to Constantinople in order to strengthen by his exhortations and example, the Catholics who were at that time suffering a cruel persecution.

St. John Damascenus died in the peaceful solitude of his cell, in the year 780 after Christ.

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## ST. STANISLAUS.

(May 7.)

"Christian courage"

. ST. JOHN the Baptist for having reproached the adulterous King Herod in Jerusalem, was put to death; a thousand years later St. Stanislaus for remonstrating with his king on the scandal he gave by the open licentiousness of his conduct, suffered death in Poland. The Holy Ghost who animated St. John the Baptist, gave the necessary strength and courage for the performance of his duty to the Saint, whose memory the Church venerates to-day.

St. Stanislaus was Bishop of Cracow, a city in Poland, and fulfilled all the duties of a true Christian and perfect Bishop so faithfully, that he would have obtained the crown of sanctity, even if he had not suffered martyrdom. As the Bishops were by virtue of their office the successors of the Apostles, he desired not to be a mere successor in their dignity and ecclesiastical power, but rather to obtain the same degree of Christian perfection.

His biographer says: "Stanislaus, the Bishop of Cracow led a heavenly life even while upon earth. A true High-priest, perfectly chaste, free from all impure desires, he guarded day and night with indefatigable care the flock entrusted to him. Not merely by the giving of excellent advice did he show himself an apostolic man, but also by the practice of perfect virtue. His teachings and manner of living were in perfect harmony with each other, for he gave no precept to others, which he himself had not already followed."

At that time Boleslaus II. was king of Poland; a man who possessed many good qualities; he was a distinguished general, and had won many battles; he was temperate in eating and drinking, had inured himself to the hardships and fatigues of war, was very merciful to supplicants, and exceedingly liberal; but these good qualities were more the result of nature, than of a Christian heart, and were counterbalanced by great vices. His anger was easily excited; he was cruel and was especially addicted to sensuality, so that in history he is known under the name of "BOLESLAUS THE WILD." Not satisfied with his wife, the queen, he seduced the daughters and wives of the nobles, at first in secret, but at a later period he thought it no longer worth while to conceal the wickedness of his conduct. The court, confessors, Bishops, and even the first Ecclesiastical Prince of the kingdom, the Archbishop of Gnesen, were silent, for they feared the wrath of the king and were afraid of losing the temporal advantages they enjoyed. Stanislaus alone was mindful of his duty as Bishop, and one day being alone with the king, he spoke to him of the great heinousness of his crimes and told him, that the people cursed him on that account, that he stained thereby his renown, and that he greatly offended God, to whom he owed so much. Only love for the welfare and honor of his king, he said, and his duty as Bishop, could induce him thus to reproach his Sovereign, and he entreated him to relinquish his sinful life, before the vengeance of God came upon him. The proud king was highly indignant at the boldness of Stanislaus, but respecting the Bishop and the pious zeal that animated him, he restrained his anger and offered some excuses by saying, that his behavior was not by far so bad as it had been represented. Stanislaus was not deceived by the subterfuges of the king and exhorted him urgently to reform his life.

Although the king on this occasion had treated St. Stanislaus with the reverence due to so godly a Bishop, he showed no signs of having been impressed with his exhortations; and even if they had left a sting in his conscience and left a seed of virtue in his heart, his conscience was soon silenced and the growth of the seed stifled by the sensual pleasures in which he wallowed; but not so easily as he forgot his exhortations, did he forget the dislike he felt for the Bishop, who had dared to reproach him, the mighty ruler, who was feared throughout Poland, and his dislike was soon changed into hatred, which was increased by the instigations of wicked courtiers, who flattered the passion of the king, and strove to turn it to their own advantage.

About this time the king was informed, that Micislaus, a Polish nobleman, had married a very handsome woman, and having sought and found an opportunity of seeing her, he was soon inflamed with the wicked desire to possess the lovely wife of his subject; but the virtuous Christine, scorned the shameful advances of Boleslaus, refused all his costly presents of jewels and golden ornaments, turned a deaf ear to his flatteries and promises, and at last defied his threats. Determined to gratify his beastly propensities, he resorted to



violence—Christine was forcibly taken from the house of her husband, who remonstrated in vain, and carried to the royal palace, where she was kept a prisoner for years.

The nobles and the better classes of the people were greatly outraged by these infamous proceedings on the part of Boleslaus, and feared with justice that their own wives and daughters might also fall victims to his lust, but they dared not complain loudly for fear of the insolent tyrant. It is true, that they implored the Archbishop of Gnesen to expose the crime of the king, as the Countess Micislaus had formerly belonged to his Diocese; but although the Archbishop was a religious and virtuous man, he was so afraid of the king, that he delayed taking any steps in her behalf. No one was then thought more fit to reprimand the wicked Prince than Stanislaus, and requested to do so by men of the highest rank and urged on by his own conscience, he resolved to follow in the footsteps of John the Baptist. Having prepared himself by offering up the holy sacrifice of the Mass, and by most fervent prayer, that God might bless his words, he entered the presence of the king and reproached him in such kind and impressive words—showing him clearly the ruin he had brought upon himself and upon his country by his sinful life—that any one, in whom a spark of virtue remained, would have been touched; but the king was already too deeply sunk in vice. On this occasion he did not pretend to restrain his wrath, and spoke in the most abusive manner to the Bishop, telling him that he deserved to be made a herdsman, in order to teach him how to address his king, and to warn others from ever making a similar attempt.

Far from being intimidated by the threats of Boleslaus, St. Stanislaus continued in his exhortations, and because the king had reproached him with want of respect, he said: “If you will compare the Royal dignity with the Apostolic office of Bishop, then is the former as much inferior to the latter as the brightness of the moon is to that of the sun, or as lead is to gold.” The king however refused to listen any longer, and angrily left the room where the interview had taken place.

The word of God and holy admonitions have frequently the same effect that the Holy Communion has, if administered to unworthy and wicked persons—it proves fatal to them. The king now gave full liberty to his vile passions, and committed the most unnatural sins, crimes that were formerly punished with death and by fire, and which are even now punished with imprisonment, and while formerly he sought to conceal his vices, he now became perfectly shameless. In his campaign against the Russians he gained possession of their capital and made it the winter-quarters of his army. Soldiers and officers following his example, committed the most terrible excesses. The few good traits of character he once had, entirely disappeared, and he became so cruel, that many innocent persons were executed by his order.

While the king was growing old in sin and crime, St. Stanislaus was growing

in virtue and merit, and although the attempt was now much more dangerous than before, he sought the presence of the king for the third time, in order to awaken his conscience, but with no better result than he had had on the two previous occasions. Seeing all his efforts and exhortations vain, to bring the king to repentance, he thought himself bound to employ the most severe measures against a profligate, who was worse than a heathen, and he informed the king, that he should excommunicate him. On hearing this the king burst into a most violent passion, and threatened to put the Bishop to death if he did. After Stanislaus had left the king, he was urgently advised not to provoke him further and to spare his own life; but he feared no danger in his combat against wickedness. He excommunicated the king, for he determined to be a faithful watchman in the service of his Lord and not to yield out of cowardice; he even wished and prayed that he might be found worthy of suffering death for the honor of God.

Boleslaus then attempted the life of the Bishop, but the latter succeeded in escaping for a time the threatening danger. Not far from Cracow was a chapel, dedicated to St. Michael and all the Angels, and here Stanislaus thought that he could undisturbed and in safety say Mass, but the king was informed by his spies, where the saintly Bishop could be found, and he at once resolved to take revenge upon him. Accompanied by a troop of soldiers he hastened to the chapel and found Stanislaus just in the act of offering up the divine sacrifice of the Mass, although informed of the arrival of his persecutor. The king ordered the soldiers to force a way into the church and kill the Bishop; but they revered and feared Stanislaus more than did the angry king, and therefore did not obey. The king himself then rushed into the church and with his sword clove open the head of Stanislaus, who was just praying for his persecutors; the king then dragged the body before the church, where it was so mutilated by the soldiers, that it no longer resembled a human form.

In this manner was the wish of both the Bishop and of the king fulfilled; the heavenly desire of the Bishop to become a martyr and the infernal wish of the king to murder his saintly and courageous pastor.

Brought to reflection by the wonderful miracles that occurred at the grave of St. Stanislaus, the king became aware of the enormity of his sins; his conscience tormented him day and night; like Cain he found rest nowhere, and at last in his great despair he left Poland and in disguise fled to Hungary. There he became crazy and wandered about in the forest, dying at last of exhaustion, his own dogs, that followed him, devouring his body. According to some writers he committed suicide, but a fate even yet more terrible than this no doubt awaited him in the other world.

St. Stanislaus merited the crown of martyrdom on account of the Christian courage with which he called the wicked king to account. And now, dear reader, having read the life of this holy man, how is it with you in this regard?

Have you no relative, friend, or acquaintance, or any one in your employ, who leads a sinful life? Have you spoken to them of their sins and faults, and endeavored to make them repent? What has been the reason if you have not done so? Perhaps your answer would be: "It would be of no use!" But this is frequently a mere excuse to quiet the conscience; the real truth is, that you are too indifferent to the salvation of your neighbor and to the honor of God, or else you are too cowardly and too much afraid, that they may take your exhortations amiss. Do you hope to obtain the bliss enjoyed by St. Stanislaus in the other world, if you have not the courage to awaken the conscience of a fellow-being for fear of awakening his anger? What the judgment of God will be in your regard, we are enabled to know from the words of the Prophet Ezechiel: "When I say to the wicked: O wicked man, thou shalt surely die: if thou dost not speak to warn the wicked man from his way, that wicked man shall die in his iniquity: but I will require his blood at thy hand. But if thou tell the wicked man, that he may be converted from his ways, and he be not converted from his way; he shall die in his iniquity: but thou hast delivered thy soul." (Ezech 33 : 8-9.

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## ST. PETER OF TARENTAS.

(May 8.)

"Value of earthly honor"

IDRAHEL, Bishop of Tarentas, a city in Savoy, was such a wicked man and gave so much scandal by his actions, that it was found necessary to deprive him of his holy office. At that time, in the year 1142, there lived in the convent of Tamies, a very pious and learned Abbot, who was looked upon as the only person who could save the neglected diocese from ruin, and he was therefore chosen Bishop of Tarentas. It required the united efforts of St. Bernard, his superior, and of the Chapter-General of the Order to prevail upon Peter—for this was the Abbot's name—to accept the proffered dignity.

Peter as Bishop led the same austere and self-denying life, that he had lived in the abbey; he ate only bread and vegetables; his meals, and those of the poor were prepared together and were the same, and if he ever allowed a difference to be made, it was, to order better food for the poor than for himself. His biographer tells us that he fulfilled all the duties of his episcopal office with great fidelity, zeal, and perseverance; the clergy and inhabitants of the diocese, neglected and corrupted as they had been by his predecessor, were brought back to the path of virtue by his exhortations and directions, but more



especially his good example. It is not our intention however to enter into any detail as to the manner in which Peter discharged the high and important duties of a Bishop, or to describe the real and apostolic spirit, which he exhibited, but we will show, how the great authority and honor, Peter acquired by his eminent virtue, was the cause of good to others. He succeeded not only in reconciling many bitter enemies, but prevailed also upon his own sovereign, to put a stop to the bloody war he was waging against one of the neighboring princes.

A very lamentable discord reigned at that time in the Catholic Church. The Emperor Frederic Barbarossa hated the lawfully chosen Pope, Alexander III., because he conscientiously defended the rights of the Church against the presumptuous Emperor. His adherents by his order had chosen another Pope and he hoped thus to overthrow the legitimate Pope Alexander III. Many Bishops openly took the part of the Anti-Pope, or through fear of Frederic, dared not to raise their voices against him. Peter was almost the only Bishop in that part of the country, who not only preached against the illegally appointed Pope and his adherents, but who also led many back into the fold of the Catholic Church.

While the emperor persecuted all who remained firm in their allegiance to Pope Alexander, he had so much regard for Peter, that he always treated him with great reverence. The courtiers reproached the emperor for manifesting such honor and esteem towards a Bishop who so zealously resisted his efforts, and said that they could not understand, how the emperor—who had removed unyielding Abbots, Bishops, and Archbishops, even such as had once been favorites with him—could now show so much regard for Peter; but the emperor replied: "If I have resisted men, I will not in his case resist God,"—meaning thereby, that he looked upon Peter not as a common man, as he regarded the others, but as a man after the heart of God.

Peter also visited other dioceses and exhorted the people, who had suffered themselves to be separated from the Catholic Church by their faithless shepherds, to be again united to their holy Mother. The great authority, enjoyed by the pious man caused them all to listen to his words with devotion, so that they returned and were again reconciled with the Church.

On another occasion Peter was just upon the point of selling his horse, which was very necessary to him in making his visitations, in order to use the money for some charitable purpose, when he received a message from the Pope, commanding him forthwith to visit the kings of France and England and endeavor to make peace between these monarchs. It was of the greatest importance that peace should be restored between these two princes, for the lives of numberless men had been already sacrificed in the war, whole countries had been laid waste, many churches had been destroyed and the Pope thought, that if any one was able to make the two kings listen to propositions of peace, it would be the holy Bishop Peter, the odor of whose sanctity had spread through all Christendom.

Peter obeyed and set out for France. When Louis VII. was informed of his approach, he sent an officer of the highest rank to meet the holy Bishop, and see that he was received in all places with every mark of honor and respect. Having had an interview with the king, his son-in-law, and the Count of Flanders, St. Peter set out for the English territory. When the English king heard, that the pious Bishop was approaching—(their meeting took place near the frontier of Normandy)—he alighted and threw himself at his feet. The people seized the Bishop's cloak to cut it in pieces, for each of them wished to possess some thing that belonged to such a Saint; but the king who venerated Peter as much as the people did, prevented them and kept the cloak as a precious relic himself. The object, for which Peter had been sent, was fully attained; by the great influence he enjoyed with the two monarchs, peace was restored. He also obtained the important concession, that Synods should be called in both England and France for the solemn recognition of the legitimate Pope Alexander III.

Peter died in the year 1174, on his return from another journey, on which he had been sent by the Pope, in order to reconcile hostile princes.

In the life of St. Peter we see distinctly the value of earthly honor to the Christian and what it may accomplish. Worldly-minded persons think a great deal of honor; they feel offended and unhappy if they hear, that they have been spoken of contemptuously, or if no regard is shown to them, and to be in the enjoyment of esteem or authority is regarded by them as a great happiness. But what will be the result of the worldly man possessing either honor or fame? Nothing but the agreeable sensation with which the soul is filled at the remembrance of having been honored; and it may therefore justly be called self-worship. The true Christian on the contrary knows no such feeling; he banishes every vain and self complacent thought from his mind. When St. Peter of Tarentas was honored on account of his high position, his apostolic life and the miracles that followed his prayers, the marks of distinction were so disagreeable to him, and he was so fearful, that his soul might in consequence suffer injury, that he secretly left his diocese and entered an abbey in Germany as a monk, but having been recognized, he was obliged to return to his See. And yet a position of honor may be made very beneficial to the world, if not used for vain purposes, but for the accomplishment of good, as we see exemplified in the life of St. Peter. If he had not enjoyed such esteem and honor, he would not have been an instrument in accomplishing so great a work as that of making peace between kings and princes, and of saving whole countries and nations from the calamities of war. Therefore, dear reader, if by the providence of God you are in the enjoyment of honor, respect, and authority, look upon it as a grace, as a talent, which you are bound to employ for the good of others; your elevated position in the eyes of the world will give to your word, example, and request greater weight, and sin may thereby be prevented and good promoted.

It is therefore your duty not only to avoid all sin, but even the appearance of sin, in order not to lessen your power of accomplishing good by having suspicion cast upon your good name. You are bound to defend and justify yourself, if you are injured by lies or slander, not because slander is grievous, but because you must guard the good reputation with which you are enabled to advance the interest of your holy religion. It is therefore a great sin to destroy the honor or the good name of a fellow-being, and the sin becomes so much the greater, if the office which he fills is one of peculiar responsibility and is one which requires a good name, in order to labor successfully for the kingdom of God. For instance, if any one by slander destroys the reputation of a priest, he impairs the usefulness of one who is the source and frequently the only source, from which the members of a congregation seek the waters of life, in order to refresh their souls.

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## ST. HERMAS.

(May 9.)

"The Kingdom of God."

IN the last chapter of his Epistle to the Romans, Paul the Apostle, salutes a brother in the faith, called Hermas, who is supposed to be the author of one of the oldest Christian writings, known under the title of: "*The Shepherd of Hermas*," a work, that was so highly prized in the earliest times of Christianity, that some Christian communities accepted it as a part of the inspired writings, like the Revelation of St. John.

We know little or nothing of his exterior life, but although we have no *relic of his body*, we can still be edified *by the relic* which we possess *of his mind*. From this most remarkable and very ancient work we intend making some few extracts, and to render them more intelligible, we will remark, that Hermas relates, that an angel in the costume of a shepherd appeared to him and made him the revelations, contained in his book, whence its title: "*The Shepherd of Hermas*." "Then he led me to a mountain in Arcadia on the summit of which we rested. He showed me a large field, around which were twelve mountains, each one of them differing in appearance. The first mountain was as black as jet; the second—barren and without vegetation; the third full of thorns and thistles; the fourth covered with plants, the upper parts of which were in bloom, but the roots were dead, and some withered away as soon as the rays of the sun fell upon them; the fifth mountain was very rough, but had green plants growing upon it; the sixth was full of chasms, both large and small, and in the



chasms plants were seen growing, having quite a withered appearance; the seventh mountain was fertile and covered with beautiful shrubs; all kinds of animals and birds found sustenance there, and the more they fed on that mountain, the more flourishing became its vegetation; the eighth mountain was full of fountains, from whose waters all God's creatures drank; the ninth was entirely destitute of water and was very desolate in appearance, but it nourished poisonous serpents, that were hurtful to man; the tenth had beautiful trees in the shade of which flocks were quietly resting; the eleventh mountain was thickly planted with trees, the boughs of which appeared to be loaded down with various fruits, and whoever perceived them, desired to eat them; the twelfth mountain shone with brightness and offered a most lovely sight; it was of indescribable beauty."—And I said to the shepherd: "Tell me now, dear sir, what these mountains signify, and why they differ so much in appearance." "Hear," said he, "these twelve mountains represent the twelve races of men that fill the whole earth. The Son of God has been proclaimed to them by those, whom He Himself sent to them." And I said to him: "Explain to me also the meaning of what I have seen, in order that every one who believes in the Lord, may hear it and praise His great, wonderful, and holy name. "Listen then" said he, "to what I shall tell thee concerning these mountains, that is, of the twelve races."

By the *first* mountain, the one which is black, is represented those who had formerly accepted the faith, but who became afterwards faithless, blasphemed the Lord and betrayed the servants of God. Death is their portion, for their conversion is impossible, and therefore they are black, because they are a wicked race.

By the *second* mountain, which is barren, is meant the deceivers who once believed, but who afterwards became teachers of corruption. They are the nearest to the black mountain, because they are also without fear of justice, yet it is possible for them to repent, if they do so immediately, but if they delay, they will share the fate of those upon the black mountain. "Why," asked I, "may they still be saved from death, and not those upon the first, since they are almost alike in wickedness?" "They may return to life by means of penance—replied he—because they have not blasphemed the Lord, nor betrayed His servants; but they deceived the people by permitting them to follow their sinful inclinations, and therefore they must suffer a certain punishment. It is possible therefore for them to repent, because they have not blasphemed the Lord."

The *third* mountain, covered with thorns and thistles, signifies those who believe, but who are either too rich or too busy to put their belief into practice; the *thistles* are the riches, the *thorns* the many cares of the world. Those, who are engrossed with worldly concerns do not associate with the servants of God and their minds are full of distraction; neither do the rich wish any intercourse with the servants of God, for fear that they might be called upon to do some-

thing for their soul ; they will therefore find it as difficult to enter the kingdom of God, as it would be for them to walk barefooted upon thorns ; but even these may be saved by repentance if they make use of the necessary means and thus accomplish some good, although their former days have been spent in vanity. If however they continue in their indifference, they will be deprived of life.

By the *fourth* mountain—rich in plants, the tops of which are verdant, but the roots decayed and withered by the heat of the sun—is represented the doubtful, and those who honor the Lord with their lips, but not with their hearts. Their words only show signs of life, their works are dead. The doubtful are not fresh, neither are they dry, not alive and yet not dead ; they are like the plants that wither under the heat of the sun. As soon as they hear of persecution and trouble, they return to their idols and are ashamed of the name of the Lord.

By the *fifth* mountain—the one that was rough, but upon which green plants were found—is represented those of the faithful, who are brought with difficulty to believe in God, who are self-complacent and who in their ignorance give themselves the appearance of being all wise. On account of their presumption they have lost the power of judging and are full of arrogance ; they assume to be very learned, while in fact they are ignorant and on account of their indulgence in folly and because of their self-sufficiency, many of them have already perished. Some however saw their error and repented ; the way of atonement is open also to the rest of them ; for they are rather indiscreet and foolish, than really wicked. If they return, they will live in God ; if not, they will perish.

The *sixth* mountain—the one filled with large and small chasms—signifies the faithful, who are at enmity with each other and who on account of their contentions grow weak in their faith. Many of them however have repented, and the rest will do so, if they listen to my commandments, for their quarrels are but of little importance, and they are easily converted ; some however are like the large chasms, they are like hard rocks ; they entertain feelings of hatred against those who have offended them and take vengeance into their own hands. Such persons will not easily obtain life. The Lord God, who rules all things and whose power extends over all creatures, does not remember offences, and is easily reconciled with those who acknowledge and confess their sins ; but man, frail and weak, and loaded down with sin, ceases not to harbor feelings of hatred for his fellow-man, as though it were in his power either to save or condemn him.

By the *seventh* mountain, which was all fertile and covered with green and beautiful plants and herbs, which gave nourishment to all kinds of creatures, and throve the better for it,—is meant the faithful, who are always innocent and good, never contend with each other, always rejoice in the servants of God, are chaste in mind, always charitable towards their fellow-beings, and who willingly and without hesitation share the fruits of their labor with them. On

account of their simplicity and child-like purity the Lord has blessed the works of their hands, and His grace is with them in all they do.

By the *eighth* mountain—full of springs, from which all the creatures of God drink—is meant those who believed in the Apostles sent by the Lord to all parts of the world, to proclaim His Gospel, and the many teachers, who preached and taught in holiness and sincerity and never gave themselves up to wicked desires, but always walked in righteousness and truth. They enjoy the company of angels.

The *ninth* mountain—desolate and full of serpents—signifies those who are believers, but who are nevertheless stained with crimes, men, who have deprived widows and orphans of their property and who abound in selfishness. The serpents with rough skins are those who denied the name of the Lord and never turned back to Him; they are forsaken, full of despair and hatred and useless to their maker. The small serpents upon the mountain, that are to be found twisted together, are the crafty and dishonest, who cheat each other, for as the sting of the serpent is fatal to man, so do their words infect and ruin man; they have lost their faith in consequence of their wicked life. Some of them, however, were saved by repentance, and the rest of them could also be saved, but without repentance they will perish.

By the *tenth* mountain—in the shade of which flocks were resting—is represented the faithful, such as Bishops, and Pastors of the Churches, and such as have without dissimulation, but with joyful hearts received the servants of God into their houses, and it signifies also heads of nations, who have protected the poor and who have always led pure lives. Such persons are loved and honored by the Lord and they will dwell hereafter among the angels, if they continue faithfully to obey the commandments of God.

The *eleventh* mountain—thickly planted with various fruit-trees—represents such of the faithful as have, with ready and willing hearts suffered death for the name of the Lord. The fruits are of different qualities and some more excellent than others. The more excellent fruits represent those, who when led before the judges, denied not the Lord, but suffered joyfully; they deserve greater honor in the eyes of God. Those, however, who were timid and wavering at heart and hesitated whether to confess or deny before they suffered, are indicated by the fruits of inferior quality. Banish therefore such irresolution from your hearts, that you may live in God for ever.

The *twelfth* mountain—the one shining with light—signifies such as have believed like innocent children, who have never thought of wickedness, have always lived virtuously and never known aught of sin. Such pure souls will inhabit the kingdom of God, because they have never violated a commandment of God, and have remained guiltless all the days of their lives, and as they possessed the innocence of children, they will be more honored, than those of whom we have previously spoken; for all children are honored by the Lord.



Happy are you, therefore, if you have put off wickedness, and have clothed yourselves with innocence, because then you shall see God."

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## ST. SOLOGNIA.

(May 10.)

"Sensual love"

EVEN heathens admitted that there were two kinds of love differing as widely from each other, as the heavens were distant from the earth, and they therefore called the more noble love "Urania," signifying heavenly. In the life of St. Solognia we will have proved to us that a sensual love is the very reverse of a pure love, and deserves to be called by its true name, lust, not love.

About a thousand years ago there lived in Villemonthe, a village, situated in the kingdom of France, a vine dresser, who had a daughter distinguished not only for the beauty of her person, but for the extraordinary purity of her life. Her parents were good Christians, and their only desire was to promote the happiness of their child, by giving her a truly Christian education. They endeavored especially to instil into her mind a horror of sin and everything that could in the least offend the majesty of God. This pious training prepared the soul of young Solognia to receive the seed of divine grace and yield a rich harvest.

When in her seventh year the holy maiden already began to manifest an ardent love for Jesus Christ. She never pronounced His sacred name without great devotion showing thereby how deeply it was impressed upon her virtuous heart; she chose Him also to be the Bridegroom of her soul, and for that reason made a vow to serve Him as a virgin.

Not far from Villemonthe there was a lonely piece of ground, uncultivated and thickly grown with trees; the place is now called "the field of Solognia," and a wooden crucifix is erected in memory of what occurred on the spot. For the reason that she could meditate there undisturbed, Solognia was in the habit of visiting the grove, whenever she found time to do so, and while there, gave herself up to prayer and spiritual converse with God so that love for Him gradually absorbed every other feeling of her heart.

But while Solognia sought only to honor and glorify God, He manifested to the world the great sanctity of His servant. We are told that persons possessed by the devil were delivered from their torments by the power of her prayers; that sometimes, as in the case of St. Peter, sick persons were cured, if her

shadow only fell upon them, and that storms of thunder and lightning were often averted by her holy prayers. As by her pure life and fidelity to the laws of God she made herself equal to our first parents before their fall, so also was she found worthy of enjoying some of the privileges accorded to them in Paradise, for even animals were obedient to her call. If, for instance, any of her sheep strayed away from the flock and fed upon the grass of a neighboring field, she did not, as was the custom of shepherds, run after them, she did not scream, she did not set her dogs upon them, she did not throw stones at them, or attempt to beat them with her crook, but without anger, or any mark of violence, she would call them in soft and gentle tones, and they never failed to obey. She is said also to have possessed great power over the birds of the air, and to have prevented them from inflicting any injury upon the growing crops.

Several miles from Villemonte was situated the capital of the province, and the son of the governor having heard of the great beauty of Solognia, and instigated by curiosity, came to the village under the pretext of hunting in the neighborhood. He found the pious maiden engaged in her devotions in the unfrequented spot where she loved to commune alone with God, and the sight of her lovely countenance inflamed the youth with a violent desire to possess her. He alighted from his horse, greeted her in a most friendly manner, and addressed her in a few polite words. At first he spoke with great reserve of the love with which she had inspired him, but finally told her that she had captivated his heart, called her his mistress and himself her servant. To relieve the mind of the pure virgin from any fears that she might entertain of a wicked design on his part, he declared that it was his intention to make her his wife, and he then depicted to her in glowing terms, the honor that, she a poor shepherdess would enjoy in becoming the wife of so noble and so wealthy a man; in short he made use of every species of flattery in order to entrap her into the snares of sin. When Solognia heard the young nobleman speak of marrying her, she was greatly frightened, for she abhorred the thought of giving to a mortal the love she bore her Saviour, and to deprive him at once of all vain hopes, she said to him earnestly: "I prefer Jesus Christ who for my sake became man, and who took upon Himself the sins of the world, to all the lovers upon earth."

The youth was surprised at such an unexpected answer, for thousands of women in the world would have eagerly accepted so dazzling an offer, as he, the son of the most distinguished man in the province, had made to a low-born shepherdess. In his rage, and inflamed by an impure love, he attempted to lay violent hands upon her, but she resisted his efforts and escaped from his embraces. He pursued, and having succeeded in overtaking her, placed her upon his horse. About 600 steps from the spot where the outrage had been committed, there was a running stream, and just as they reached its borders, she sud-

denly loosened his hold upon her and threw herself from the horse. The wicked passion of the bad man was now changed into hate and a desire for revenge, and drawing his sword he struck her upon the head inflicting a mortal wound. After pronouncing the Holy Name of Jesus three times, the spirit of the pure and saintly virgin ascended to God.

Here, dear reader, do we see the true character of sensual love, a love that does not respect the person of its object, but will abuse and very frequently destroy the very one, so wickedly pursued. St. Solognia was murdered by the man who but a few moments before had sworn that he loved her more than he did anything upon earth, merely because she refused to comply with his wishes; for the same reason was Joseph in Egypt slandered by the wife of Potiphar, and the chaste Susanna accused of a capital offence by the two elders. This however is not the greatest evil resulting from the love of a sensual man, Joseph and Susanna were saved by divine Providence, and St. Solognia by the violent death she suffered was led into the presence of Him whom she so truly loved, and who loved her with an everlasting love; but the greatest evil that an immoral man inflicts upon the woman who permits herself to be deceived by his protestations of love, and who yields to his infamous desires, is, that he causes her to lose that which she can never possess again—her innocence. Her soul becomes steeped in sin, and very frequently her honor and reputation are ruined for ever: her days upon earth become most wretched and unhappy, and she dreads death for fear of the eternal punishments of God. Shun therefore all declarations of love from the lips of a sensual man as you would the approach of a vile serpent, for his love often brings death to the soul.

From the time of her death Solognia was revered as a Saint; for even in her lifetime her renown for sanctity was very great, by reason of the many miracles that followed her prayers, and a church was afterwards built and dedicated to her. Two special events are recorded in which was manifested what power the holy shepherdess possessed before the throne of God. Her body had been placed in a rich shrine, and was sometimes carried about in procession, and if any, in a state of mortal sin, attempted to lift the shrine, it resisted all efforts to move it, till others took their place. Every year on the tenth of May a solemn procession took place around the field of St. Solognia, and several thousand people were usually assembled together on these occasions. The road leading to the field was too narrow for so many persons to walk with any kind of regularity, and in consequence the growing grain of the adjacent fields was frequently trodden down, but two days after the procession had passed, the grain would look as though it had never been trampled under foot. The path also that the Saint took on her way to her lonely place of devotion, was covered with a beautiful and peculiar kind of grass, different from anything that grew in the neighborhood.



## ST. MAJOLUS.

(May 11.)

"Power of the Priesthood"

ST. ODILO, whose memory we have already commemorated on the first day of January, is the author of the life of St. Majolus. Odilo was the Abbot of the once celebrated abbey of Clugny in Aquitaine, and St. Majolus was his predecessor. Other contemporaries of St. Majolus have also written his life, because it was most remarkable for sanctity and the miracles obtained through his agency.

St. Majolus was of a wealthy family and even in his youth was so highly esteemed for his great learning and virtues, that he was chosen Archbishop of Becançon. This high dignity however he refused to accept, and entered the Abbey of Clugny as a lay-brother; but light can not be concealed, and it was soon discovered, what a great treasure the monastery had gained in this new member, and he was chosen Abbot. It was at one time the determination of some to elect him to the highest office of the Church, to make him Pope; but this he resisted as firmly as he had formerly refused to accept the dignity of Archbishop, for in his humility he declared that he did not possess the necessary qualities. Three years before his death, which occurred on the eleventh day of May, 994, he appointed St. Odilo to be his assistant in the government of the abbey.

In the life of this saintly Abbot we read of many miracles, some of which we shall mention. Once a number of beggars addressed him, among the rest a blind man, who asked not for alms, but for his eye-sight; he said, the Apostle Peter had revealed to him, that he would obtain his eye-sight by using the water in which St. Majolus had washed his hands. In spite of the great charity of his heart Majolus refused to give the water to the blind man, for in his humility he did not think himself capable of working a miracle. He left the crowd, while the blind man was still praying and entreating him, to give him the water; but the latter having been told which road the Abbot would take, had himself led to a certain spot and waiting there until Majolus came stopped his horse, knelt down and implored the pious Abbot most fervently to help him. Overcome by the solicitations and distress of the blind man, Majolus alighted, blessed the water which the blind man had brought with him in a vessel, washed therewith the man's eyes, saying: "May the blessed Apostle St. Peter pray for thee in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ," and behold! the blind man was enabled to see. Majolus requested the man who had been cured and those who had witnessed the miracle, not to speak of it to other persons, but to thank God for it in their hearts. A blind boy also attained his eye-sight, after

his father with full confidence in the power of God had washed the eyes of his child in the water which St. Majolus had used to cleanse his hands.

At that time there raged a painful and often fatal disease called St. Anthony's fire. Those attacked by it suffered most terribly and could neither eat nor sleep; all the efforts of the physicians to master it, were in vain, but several persons were miraculously cured of this horrible plague by the prayers of St. Majolus.

Once while Majolus was on a pilgrimage to Rome, he stopped at the house of a Bishop, who was suffering greatly from illness. Majolus exhorted him to bear with a Christian spirit the visitation of God and to accept his pains as a purgatory upon earth. As it was Holy-week, a time when the holy oils are blessed, which can only be done by the Bishop, the sick Bishop entreated his pious guest to obtain for him, by means of his powerful prayer, the divine grace, that he might recover sufficiently to consecrate the Holy oils. Majolus consented, and in consequence of his fervent prayer, the Bishop recovered and was enabled to attend to his Episcopal duties. Many other sick persons were also cured by the intercession of St. Majolus, and a boat, filled with passengers that had sunk in the Rhone, was miraculously rescued from destruction, and the passengers all saved by the prayers and by the sign of the cross made over them by St. Majolus.

Majolus, like his successor St. Odilo, was in the highest degree charitable towards the poor. The crops having once failed in the country around Clugny, he distributed nearly all the food of the abbey among the poor, and when the steward in his anxiety complained, that scarce enough was left for the members of the abbey, Majolus comforted him simply with the evangelic promise, that God would provide for all that feared and loved Him. The number of poor persons, of widows and orphans, however, increased; they came, bathed in tears, entreating the saintly Abbot for bread, and yet he had nothing more to give. What was the charitable man now to do? He applied to the fountain of all charity, to God. In a lonely chapel he prayed most fervently for help and bestowed his prayer as spiritual alms upon the needy, since he had no means of giving them visible alms. Having finished his prayer, he looked downwards and saw seven gold pieces lying before him. He thought it a delusion of Satan and repeated his prayers; but as often as he looked upon the ground, there he saw the gold lying. He knew then that it was a gift from heaven, and taking what was necessary to procure a day's subsistence for the inmates of the abbey, gave all that remained to the poor.

Different writings concerning the life of the Abbot Majolus contain other miracles wrought by his intercession, during life and after death, so that even his presence had become a source of great blessing to those who invoked him in their hour of trouble. We read of many similar miracles happening in the lives of other Saints, and the people therefore regarded it as a great benefit to

have a holy person residing in their midst. Thus the Catalans intended to kill St. Romuald (February 7,) when he was on the point of leaving them, so that they might at least possess his body. Such a sentiment was indeed absurd, barbarous, and sinful, but it showed the high esteem in which the presence of a Saint was held. We may however maintain that God bestows, through the ministry of a Catholic priest, still greater benefits upon mankind, than the visible miracles recorded in the life of a Saint; for He works daily by means of His priests invisible miracles in the soul, and every priest when he consecrates becomes a worker of miracles. St. Majolus restored the eye-sight to a blind boy and to a blind beggar; but the human soul is also blind by nature; it knows not God, knows not the road leading to Him and lives in darkness, in a night of death as regards its future destiny. By faith alone does the soul obtain light and the power of seeing—and the light of faith is kindled by the Christian instruction of the priest. St. Majolus cured diseases, mitigated pains and rescued persons from the peril of death; but the soul of man is destroyed by many worse diseases than attack the human body, such as envy, hatred, passion, falsehood, love of the world, pride, uncleanness; and every sin not atoned for in this world, causes us terrible pains even in this life, in the stings of conscience which we experience. To be separated from God by sin, is death to the soul, for its existence in such a state can as little resemble life as a corpse in the coffin. The priest has a miraculous power given to him, for our Saviour said to his Apostles and to their successors: "Whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven." The priest restores health to him, who is absolved in confession, and delivers him from future suffering and eternal death. St. Majolus was by his prayer enabled to feed the hungry; but the soul, in order to live for God and to gain heaven, also needs nourishment, and this food for the soul is obtained by the prayers of the priest; for when he pronounces in the sacrifice of the Mass the words of consecration, then God for our spiritual nourishment changes the bread into the most holy body and blood of Christ.

The benefits and miracles which God daily bestows upon us through His priests, are much greater than the miraculous cure of bodily diseases. Every Christian should therefore thank and praise God for the miracles, whereby He so frequently glorifies His saints before the eyes of the world;—but he will thank and praise God still more for the wonderful benefits and saving miracles which he daily bestows upon millions of Catholics through the agency of His priests, and in which every one may participate.

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## ST. RICHTRUDIS.

(May 12.)

"Widowhood."

As a forest when newly cleared and sown yields very rich crops at first, so also does the seed of Christianity, when sown among newly converted nations, produce in the first ages a great number of Saints. The truth of this was plainly visible among the Franks, when in the fifth century after Christ they, with their king Clovis, were gained over to Christ. Many Saints were to be found among this people after their conversion and St. Richtrudis, whose memory we commemorate to-day, was one of the first.

Adalbalus, a wealthy nobleman, who possessed the high regard of the king, wished to marry. His grand-mother Gertrude is revered as a Saint and he himself was such an excellent Christian, that he was numbered among the Saints after his death. No wonder then that in choosing a wife he deemed it most important to find a woman harmonizing in heart and character with himself. Such a companion did he find in Richtrudis, and the pious couple obeyed most faithfully the advice given by Paul the Apostle, in regard to matrimony: "Let every one of you love his wife as himself, and let the wife reverence her husband. Let women be subject to their husbands as to the Lord; husbands love your wives." (Ephes. 5 : 22, 33.)

United by the bonds of faith and love they praised God with their lips and with their hearts and served him in holiness and righteousness all the days of their life. As the tree, so are its fruits; they were blessed with four children, who are all venerated as Saints. Maurontus their son, became the Abbot of a monastery: Clotsendis, Eusebia, and Adalsendis, their daughters, devoted themselves likewise to God by becoming nuns. Adalbalus, the husband of our Saint, was obliged to undertake a journey, and Richtrudis accompanied him a part of the way. On her return home she felt sad, for her heart was filled with gloomy forebodings, which indeed were soon to be fulfilled. Adalbalus fell into the hands of robbers who waylaid and murdered him.

We may imagine the grief of St. Richtrudis when informed of the death of her husband, a grief increased by the sight of her children, who were at that time very young, and who loudly lamented the loss of their father. After the first bitterness of affliction had passed away, St. Richtrudis consulted with several Christian friends, especially the saintly Bishop Amandus, about her future life. The latter reminded the pious widow of the words of the Apostle Paul: "A woman is bound by the law as long as her husband liveth: but if her husband die, she is at liberty: let her marry to whom she will; only in the Lord. But more blessed shall she be, if she so remain," (1 Cor. 7 : 39, 40); and although Richtrudis was still young, she determined, in consequence of this Evangelic ad-

vice never to marry again. Resolutions however that are pleasing to God, are sometimes as soon as taken severely tested, and so it was with that of Richtrudis. The king himself informed the young widow of his wish to see her married to one of the most distinguished nobles of his court; but Richtrudis firmly adhered to her determination and all efforts and persuasions to make her yield were vain. The king then resorted to threats, but St. Amandus advised her not to make known her promise of devoting herself to God, and to declare, that in this affair she would only act with the consent of the king.

Richtrudis, having thus appeased the anger of the king, invited him to a banquet at her house. The king came accompanied by several of his courtiers, who had been likewise invited, and when all her guests were in a cheerful mood in consequence of the splendid repast, Richtrudis, who was determined to accomplish her purpose, rose and asked the king, if he would permit her in her own house to do as she wished. Without the least hesitation the king answered in the affirmative; seeing her with a goblet in her hand, he thought that she intended pledging him or some of the other guests, as was then customary upon such occasions; but Richtrudis acting in accordance with the advice of her spiritual director, took out a nun's veil already blessed, put it on her head and pronounced her vows. The king and the other guests were greatly surprised; he left her house in great anger, but Richtrudis had attained her object and was henceforth no longer troubled with proposals of marriage.

We see what St. Richtrudis did, in order to avoid a second marriage, and yet how many widows and widowers do we not see daily striving eagerly to marry again. Which is right? It is certainly more praiseworthy for a widow to remain faithful to her husband, who has preceded her to the grave. God perhaps may have deprived you of your husband, in order to sever the strongest tie that bound you to the world; you should therefore so much the more occupy yourself with thoughts of heaven, where united for ever with your husband you will always dwell in the presence of God.

What kind of love is it, that so soon forgets the dead and so soon seeks and accepts another. Even the heathen Romans looked upon a second marriage as neither right nor honorable; and in the first ages of Christianity a second marriage was regarded not as really sinful, but as an imperfection; and even at the present time the benediction given by the Church in the ceremony of a first marriage is omitted in a second. There are certain circumstances, however, that render it not only advisable but even obligatory for a person to enter upon a second marriage. Thus, for instance, a man may have many young children, and his business may be of such a character, that strange persons can not supply the place of a good wife. In this case love and care for his children require him to marry again, if he can find a Christian woman; but how can we excuse persons, who marry for the second time, when their children no longer need the care of a mother, and who thus cause only trouble and discord by add-

ing a second family to the first? But the *not marrying again* of widowed persons is in itself of no value, if they do not use their freedom from all matrimonial cares, to serve God with an undivided heart; on the contrary some widowed persons became frequently much more worldly than they were in married life, and therefore St. Paul says: "But she that is a widow indeed, and desolate, let her hope in God, and continue in supplications and prayers night and day. For she that liveth in pleasures is dead while she is living." (1 Tim 5: 5, 6.)

Let us see how Richtrudis spent the days of her widowhood. Her biographer tells us: "If Richtrudis as a wife yielded fruit thirty-fold, as a widow she yielded fruit sixty-fold; and if in the management of her household she served Christ as a Martha, she now sat at His feet as a Mary." She distributed her possessions with prudent consideration, renounced all worldly luxury, appeared abroad always veiled and in mourning, denied herself all the pleasures and amusements, to which she had formerly been accustomed, devoted herself to fervent prayer and to the exercise of watching and fasting, and finally joined the nuns of a retired convent. Her three daughters were also persuaded by her to choose the safe road to heaven and instead of living in the world, they devoted themselves to the Lord in monastic seclusion. The youngest of them died, as we are told, on Christmas, and on this occasion St. Richtrudis manifested the whole strength of her Christian soul; for on the day when the angel spoke the words: "Behold I bring you tidings of great joy," grief at the death of her daughter should not be superior to joy at the birth of her Saviour. Without tears or mourning she spent the three first days, and only on the fourth day, when the Church commemorates the martyrdom of the Holy Innocents, did she retire to a lonely place and there weep for the loss of her child, as did the mothers in Bethlehem.

St. Richtrudis reached the age of seventy-four and the time of her widowhood may be compared with a fruitful summer and autumn, for she was constantly growing in all Christian virtues, especially in humility, obedience, patience, purity, forbearance, kindness, modesty, benevolence, self-denial, and devotion, and thus became worthy to be received into the eternal abode of heaven.

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## ST. ROLENDIS.

(May 13.)

"Death of the young."

MORE than a thousand years ago there lived in Belgium a prince by the name of Desiderius; he had but one child, a daughter, whose name was Rolendis. The prince gave his daughter a most admirable education, as she was destined to inherit his princely possessions. Rolendis in her maidenhood was, by reason of her high rank, as the daughter and heiress of a sovereign prince, the most distinguished lady of her native country, but she was not less distinguished for her many virtues and charming modesty, so that not only did the court of her father, but the courts also of other princes resounded with her praises.

The son of the King of Scotland, a renowned warrior, had also heard of the great virtues and beauty of Rolendis, and he set out for Belgium to offer his heart and hand to the princess. Desiderius, from hospitality and respect for the royal descent of his guest, received him with much honor; but Rolendis, who devoted herself entirely to the service of God and despised all royal pomp, participated but seldom in the festivities of the court. The Scottish prince made known to Desiderius the reason of his coming and solicited his daughter in marriage. After a short deliberation, Desiderius consented, for he and his whole court regarded it as a great honor and political advantage to be brought thus into alliance with the royal family of Scotland.

Rolendis, however, had made a vow to live a virgin, in order to serve God with greater purity, and a heart entirely devoted to Him, thus exemplifying the words of St. Paul: "I esteem all things to be but loss, for the excellent knowledge of Jesus Christ my Lord" (Philipp. 3 : 8.) She did not feel the least desire for the things of this world. Most fervently did she now therefore implore God for His guidance, and while thus trusting in Him she was possessed with a singular wish. She had once heard of St. Ursula and the eleven thousand virgins, whose remains are preserved in the city of Cologne; thither she now desired to go, so that she might be received hereafter into their company. Clad in a very simple dress, and accompanied by a maid-servant and two trustworthy domestics, she started on her journey during the night, but not accustomed to the hardships of traveling on foot, she suffered greatly from heat and fatigue. Her companions entreated her most earnestly to give herself some rest, but in her great desire to reach Cologne, and in her fear of being prevented by some accident from attaining her object, she refused to listen to their request. At last she became perfectly exhausted and was obliged to sit down by the roadside. Her maid burst into tears and again besought her to rest while she sought a lodging in the neighborhood. Rolendis consented and her companions led her to the neighboring village of Viliers, where they were permitted to stay

over night in the house of a kind peasant. Early the next morning she wished to continue her journey, but her strength failed; she fell dangerously sick and eight days later the princess Rolendis breathed her last in the house of the hospitable peasant.

Many and especially worldly minded persons may look upon the early death of St. Rolendis as accidental or as caused by too great exhaustion in consequence of her journey; but the true Christian knows that nothing happens by chance: he believes in the words of the Lord: "Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? and not one of them shall fall on the ground without your Father." (Matt. 10 : 29.)

Nevertheless, we can not always refrain from wondering why it is, that so many excellent young men and women die in the spring-time of life; and perhaps others may have been asked the very question that was addressed to the author of this work last Epiphany. We were present at the funeral of a saintly virgin, who in spite of the opposition of her relatives and other obstacles, succeeded in being received as a novice in a convent. Her own joy in being enabled to live entirely for God was not greater, than that of the members of the convent, in receiving the lovely and really Christian maiden into their midst, and her great talents and zeal justified their hope that they had gained an excellent teacher for the young; but soon after she had taken the veil she became ill with nervous fever and died. Our companion at the funeral spoke of the excellent qualities of the deceased and said: "There are so many people in our place, whom we could well spare, and who are a burden to others; why then had this promising virgin to die?"

Many and various reasons may be adduced in such cases of premature death; perhaps the souls of the departed would have gained little, but lost much by a longer life; it may be, that great affliction was in store for them, from which God desired to preserve them; perhaps He wished to turn the thoughts and hearts of parents and relations to the place, whither a beloved son or daughter had preceded them; but still another reason may be given, which bears directly upon the life of St. Rolendis. After her death, by invoking her intercession not only did several miraculous cures take place, but storms, that had lasted for some time and which threatened to cause famine and even pestilence, suddenly ceased, when her body, preserved in Gerpinia was carried about in procession and the promise made to observe the custom every year.

Thus St. Rolendis rendered more help and greater blessings after her death, than she ever obtained during her life-time, and thus also may young persons who in bloom of youth and sanctity leave this world for a better one, become more useful to their relatives and friends in their higher abode, than if they had remained here below. Although no visible miracles may take place after their death, as was the case with St. Rolendis, yet such favorites of God will intercede

for us, and perhaps obtain permission of God, to be near us and protect and assist us, without our knowing it.

## BLESSED JULIANA (GILIAN) OF NORWICH.

(April 14.)

"Divine Benevolence."

JULIANA of Norwich lived a century later than did St. Juliana whose memory was commemorated on the 5th of April. We still possess a work written by her containing revelations, highly edifying and easily understood by all Christians. She was, as she herself says, a simple unlearned virgin, who from her very youth earnestly sought for God. She prayed especially for three graces; that she might become more devoted to the Passion of Christ, that she might be afflicted with bodily sufferings, and that she might endure them patiently for the honor of God.

When in her thirtieth year she was taken dangerously ill, and having fallen into a trance on the fourteenth of May, certain revelations were made to her, which she afterwards wrote down and from which we make a few extracts.

"Suddenly I beheld the Saviour, and I saw the precious blood trickling down from underneath his crown of thorns. At the same moment the Holy Trinity filled my heart with great joy, and I exclaimed aloud, 'Praise the Lord.'

"I had also a vision of the great love He bore mankind. I saw that He is all that is good, and that nothing but good comes from Him. His love envelopes us like a cloak, and as the body is covered by a garment, and the flesh by the skin, so also is the soul and body clothed as it were in the love of God.

"Our kind Lord said that He rejoiced and was infinitely happy on account of the sufferings He had endured for us, and that He would have undergone more if He had been called upon to suffer more.

"The Father is especially gratified by what Jesus accomplished for our salvation and the Father therefore gave us to Him as His reward and crown, and Jesus prizes this crown so highly, that He is always ready to suffer again for us, if necessity should again require Him to do so.

"With a joyful countenance our Lord gazed upon the wound in His side, and showed me there a place rich in beauty and large enough to contain the whole race of man, whose destiny it is yet to dwell together in peace and harmony.

"He showed to me also His sacred heart pierced in the middle, from which



flowed streams of infinite love, which had no beginning and which will have no end: and when I had seen all this, He said to me: 'See how I love the children of men.'

"Jesus is the true author of life, He nourishes us not with milk, but with His own divine body, and gives us as our reward the joys of the kingdom of heaven. In our spiritual education the Lord evinces great tenderness; He sharpens our perceptions, prepares and levels all obstacles in the way, eases our conscience, strengthens our hearts, enlightens our understanding and endows us with a knowledge of His most blessed divinity, causes us also to love all that He loves and to rejoice in Him and in all His works.

"If we are heavily burdened with sin, then are we apt to imagine all our efforts useless and thus become entirely discouraged; but Jesus desires not that we should then turn from Him, nothing is more displeasing to Him, than that we should act in such a manner, for it is His will, that we should be like little children. If a little child is in danger it runs to its mother or implores her help; in the same manner does Jesus wish us to act and speak to Him in the anguish of our soul: 'Dear Mother, have pity on me; I am stained with sin, and can only purify myself with Thine assistance and grace!' In good or bad circumstances we should have sweet confidence in the love of Jesus; His precious blood is sufficient to make us pure; it is His privilege and He glories in it, to make us happy. This we should always know, for it is His wish, that we should love Him with all our heart, and confide in Him with all our strength.

"Again the Lord said to me: 'Pray with energy and fervor; though to pray may be distasteful to thee, nevertheless it is of great advantage to thee, even if thou dost not feel any immediate advantage from so doing. When thou art in affliction, then are thy prayers very agreeable to me, and thus thy whole life is a prayer in my sight.' When the soul is tempted, embarrassed, and troubled, then is it time to pray, in order that it may become pleasing to God; for He is always one and the same in love.

"Our Lord can never be pleased in seeing His servants doubting His benevolence; reverential fear pleases God, it is gentle, and the deeper it penetrates into our heart, the less do we feel it on account of the strength of our love. Love and fear are closely connected; he who loves, fears also, and yet he is not troubled by this fear. Every other fear differing from this holy fear, although it may clothe itself in the appearance of godliness, is not agreeable. A holy fear causes us to shun everything that is not good, and to take refuge in the arms of our Lord as a child does in the lap of its mother, acknowledging our weakness and our great poverty, but confessing also His eternal goodness and blessed love, seeking our salvation in Him alone, and clinging to Him with unwavering confidence. A fear with such effects is good and beneficial; a fear that works differently, is false.

"The greatest wisdom of a soul consists in doing the will and in following the

advice of its best friend. This best friend is Jesus. Neither in fortune nor misfortune should we turn from Him; yet the devil will endeavor to prevent us from the blissful vision of our eternal Friend by filling our hearts with false fear. All that is contrary to love and peace, is caused by the devil and his adherents. It is true, that we fall through our own weakness and folly, but through the mercy and grace of the Holy Ghost we rise again to greater joy, and although our enemy gains a little by our fall, he loses sometimes more by our rising through love and humility than he gained by our fall.

“During our life on earth, we have in our heart a wonderful mixture of joy and woe. We have in the heart our Lord Jesus Christ, risen from the dead, and we have in us the misery and the evil of Adam’s fall and death. In the Lord was shown me the compassion and mercy He felt at Adam’s fall, and also the high nobility and infinite glory that is given to man by virtue of the passion and death of His dear Son. And therefore He rejoices greatly at this fall on account of the fulness of bliss that has been bestowed in consequence upon man, and which is much greater than would have been given to us but for this fall. And thus we have reason to mourn, because our sin was the cause of the suffering of Christ; but we have also reason to rejoice on account of the infinite love that caused Him to undergo this suffering.

“Our good Lord opened my spiritual eyes and showed me my soul in the midst of my heart. I saw the soul so spacious and wide, as though it were a great world. It is a city full of glory and in its midst was our Lord Jesus, true God and true man, under the appearance of a perfect man, the highest Bishop, the greatest King, and the most glorious Lord. And I saw Him clad in beautiful and festive garments sitting in the soul, surrounded by peace and happiness. He rules and in us is His real dwelling. The most dazzling light and the brightest splendor of this city is the glorious love of the Lord. What can give us greater joy, than to see Him rejoice in us, more than in all His other works. He made the soul of man as beautiful, good, and precious, as He could make a creature, and it is His will, that our hearts shall be far above the lowness of earth and all vain troubles, in order to rejoice in Him.

“As I had seen all this with devotion, then our good Lord showed me these words, without speaking or opening His lips: ‘Know, that what thou hast seen was no dream; but accept it and believe in it, guard it and strengthen and console thyself thereby,—and thou wilt never be conquered. This whole life and all the misery on earth is only like the point of a needie, and when man is received into the state of bliss then all pain ceases.’”

This is only a small extract from what this pious soul saw, and experienced; but it is sufficient to make us anticipate and love the beauty and benevolence of God. It is true, the holy Scriptures tell us also of great judgments, and St. Paul writes, “It is a dreadful thing to fall into the hands of the living God;” (Hebr. 10 : 31,) but He is such only to the sinner, as the sun is a torment to

the birds of night and to inflamed eyes, while in fact he is the source of all beauty and life upon earth. Strive to become perfectly good and sound in heart and in soul, dear reader, and you will become daily more conscious of the infinite sweetness, kindness, and goodness of God, so that at last nothing will give delight to the soul but God. And therefore Blessed Juliana said: "I learned also that the soul would not possess real peace until it has reached Him, because I know that He is the fulness of joy, of love, of benevolence, and blessing, that He is the true life."

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## ST. ISIDORE.

(May 15.)

"The Holy Peasant."

ST. ISIDORE lived in Madrid, the present capital of Spain, the country where another St. Isidore, whose festival falls upon the fourth of April, also lived; but while the latter was a celebrated Bishop and a Doctor of the Church, the former, whose memory we commemorate to-day, was but a simple peasant. Every class of society is exposed to various temptations, trials, and dangers as regards the spiritual welfare of its members, but enjoys also advantages, that may promote a truly Christian life. Thus farmers easily become very covetous, the labor which they undergo in gaining their bread often causes them to attach an unreasonably high value to earthly possessions, and from that very source arise the many quarrels and law-suits, so general among country people, and yet in proportion there are perhaps more good Christians to be found among the rural population, than among other classes of society. The world has not for the husbandman sufficient allurements to make him ungodly; when laboring daily in the field, he sees himself surrounded by evidences of divine Omnipotence, kindness, and wisdom, and the state of the atmosphere, on which he is obliged to rely for his success, continually reminds him, that the fruit of all labor and efforts depends entirely upon God. We therefore frequently meet with true piety in many rural communities, religion being with the inhabitants a most important and serious affair. St. Isidore is a living proof, how a peasant may not only become a good Christian, but even a perfect Saint. Isidore followed in every respect the teachings of Christ: "Seek ye, therefore, first the kingdom of God, and his justice; and all these things shall be added unto you." (Matt. 6 : 33.)

He always commenced his daily labors by first visiting the house of God; he attended every morning the holy sacrifice of Mass, and although much of his time was spent in church, his duties in the field were not neglected, but on the



contrary he was more laborious than his neighbors. Many persons, who are obliged to work for a livelihood, if told of the duty and necessity of praying, reply that they have no time, that they must work continually to earn their bread. Such excuses and evasions are refuted by the example of St. Isidore. He had hired himself for a certain sum to attend to the cultivation of the estate of a nobleman; but as is often the case with worldly persons who become vexed when they see the great piety of others, several neighbors of holy Isidore slanderously told his master, that Isidore by going so frequently to church, neglected his work and left it half undone. The lord, instigated by these wicked men, called his tenant roughly to account; but Isidore in spite of all threats remained firm in the practice of his religious duties. Yet he proposed to his landlord, if he thought himself injured thereby, to estimate the supposed loss, as he was ready to indemnify him; but the landlord, who intended to see himself how Isidore spent his time, concealed himself near the road Isidore was obliged to take in coming from the church. He soon observed him to his work, and was about angrily entering the field, where Isidore was now ploughing, in order to reproach him, when he suddenly perceived two other ploughs, one on each side of Isidore's, and each held by a youth clad in white. Knowing that Isidore could not obtain such aid from his neighbors, he was obliged to regard it as something supernatural; but while directing his steps toward the field, in order to investigate the appearance of the youths more closely, he for a moment turned away his head, and when he looked again the two yoke of oxen had disappeared. This miracle caused a great change in his mind; he now addressed Isidore the servant of God, in a very friendly manner and questioned him about the vision: Isidore however declared, that he had neither asked help from any one, nor had he seen any one, but that he was accustomed in all his actions to call upon the assistance of God. The landlord then knew that the divine grace was operating in favor of his tenant, and he therefore said to him: "From henceforth I shall never again listen to slander, but you shall have the direction of my whole estate, and you may act in all things as you think proper." And he related himself the miraculous event in the city, so that it became everywhere known.

Isidore was so full of the spirit of charity, that although himself very poor, he lived a most self-denying life, in order to be able to give something to those poorer than himself. How pleasing this truly Christian love was to God, was also made known by a miraculous event. He belonged to a brotherhood, which met once a year and dined together. On one occasion Isidore remained too long in church, and arrived when the dinner was over, nevertheless he invited several poor persons to enter, who stood before the house where the dinner had taken place. Having been told that only his portion was left, and that he consequently could not entertain those whom he had invited, he replied very calmly: "We shall see, what God will bestow on us,"—and his portion having been brought

in, the dish was miraculously filled with food, so that not only the invited poor, but several others also could be entertained. All present rejoiced in this miracle, but Isidore in his gratitude raised his hands toward heaven and then went to the house of God to pour out his praise and thanks in fervent prayer.

Isidore was not only charitable, as much as it was in his power to be towards the poor, but as a true child of the heavenly Father his heart was full of kindness for animals. Once during the winter when the earth was covered with snow, he was carrying a sack of grain to the mill to grind, when he saw many hungry birds on the trees, and moved by compassion he fed them out of his sack. His companion ridiculed him for thus foolishly squandering his grain; but as a proof how much God must have been pleased with this act of Isidore's, his sack, when he came to the mill, contained as much grain as he had originally put in, and yielded when ground two sacks of flour.

What a difference between St. Isidore and many peasants, who have no pity for the animals that toil for them, and not unfrequently treat them in a most unfeeling manner. When at last the time arrived, that Isidore as a faithful servant was called to enjoy the vision of the Lord, he exhorted his relatives to walk in the fear of God, received the Holy Sacraments and died in peace.

The author of the life of St. Isidore remarks, that in regard to this Saint were fulfilled the words of Wisdom: "*She (wisdom) conducted the Just through the right way, and showed him the kingdom of God, and gave him the knowledge of holy things.*" (Wis. 10 : 10.)



## ST. JOHN NEPOMUCENE.

(May 16.)

"The seal of confession"

ONCE, in the city of Prague, we stood on the grand old bridge, that, resting on many arches, spans the Moldaw, and looked at the great multitude crossing to and fro. Upon each pier stands a statue of a Saint, cut in stone; we do not remember, how many there are, but our astonishment was excited at seeing the majority of persons passing over the bridge bow before two of these statues without showing any particular reverence to the rest. Who were these Saints, to whose statues the people showed such special veneration? The one represented the most Blessed Virgin Mary, the other St. John Nepomucene. In reading the life of the Saint, you will discover why the inhabitants of Prague manifest so much love and veneration for him.

John was born at Nepomuc, a village in Bohemia, whence his surname

"Nepomucene." His parents were peasants, but they have been so honored for his sake, that on the place, where his father's house once stood, a church has been erected, the High-Altar covering the spot where the Saint was born. We will pass over the events of his early youth and will speak to you of the time when he labored as a priest and preacher in the city of Prague. His sermons were so eloquent, that all flocked to hear him and many persons were converted to the true faith. At that time Wenceslas IV., was emperor of Germany and king of Bohemia; he was a prince who placed no restraints upon his vile passions, and lived in the indulgence of many vices. The sermons of the holy priest at first made an impression upon the heart of Wenceslas, and to show him his high regard, he offered him a bishopric; but John was so truly humble, that he thought himself destitute of the qualities necessary to make a good bishop, and he firmly refused to accept the high dignity. At a later period the king offered him a provostship, that had become vacant in the city of Prague, with a yearly revenue of eighty thousand florins. John again refused, but accepted two other offices, which brought him neither personal advantages, nor riches, but which enabled him to accomplish a great amount of good,—the office of royal almoner and confessor of Queen Jane, the wife of Wenceslas. Jane had always been a very pious woman, but under the direction of St. John, she became a true Saint, spending the greater part of her time with God and in caring for the poor, whom she served and attended in person; but the more the queen progressed in Christian perfection, the deeper sank king Wenceslas into the abyss of sin. Satan seemed to have him entirely in his power and endeavored to drive him mad by his delusions. Without any apparent cause he became very jealous and suspicious of his empress, although she increased daily in piety; and at last these delusions increased to such a degree, that he determined to compel the confessor of the empress to disclose to him her confession. He accordingly sent for St. John and told him, that he was alone able to deliver the mind of his king from all uneasiness and torture, by acquainting him with the confession of the queen. As her king and husband he was entitled to know the inmost secrets of his wife's heart: he would promise him on his royal word to speak of it to no one, and offered to grant him any thing that he desired. Amazed at the sacrilegious request of the emperor, John replied earnestly and decidedly, that he would obey his sovereign in every thing, that was not contrary to the will of God, but that he would never consent to comply with such a demand, whatever might be the consequences.

Wenceslas was enraged at his answer, but on this occasion abstained from violence, hoping by repeated persuasion and threats to succeed in attaining his object, and he therefore quietly dismissed the saintly priest. John, however, foreboded that the silence of the king was like the calm that often precedes the coming tempest on a summer-day.

Some time after this interview a capon was served at the royal table which



did not appear to the king to be well cooked, and in his anger he gave orders, that the cook should be placed upon the fire and roasted better than the capon had been. No one dared to contradict or remonstrate with the king, and the order was on the point of being executed, when St. John hastened in, threw himself at the feet of the king and entreated him most impressively to recall his inhuman command; but seeing that the king did not listen to his prayers he proceeded to exhort him with true Apostolic dignity and power. The king now became furious and after grossly insulting the pious servant of God, ordered him to be thrown into a dark dungeon. Passion, like straw thrown into the fire, quickly consumes itself; but the king kept John imprisoned, not so much in consequence of his anger, as in order to accomplish a well considered and wicked purpose; he hoped now to force the imprisoned Saint to comply with his former demand to divulge the queen's confession, and therefore offered to release him, if he would do so; but John would rather suffer imprisonment, chains, hunger, thirst, and every earthly torment, than commit this sin.

The wicked are unable to understand the feelings and thoughts of true Christians, and generally judge of them by themselves, and as the king had at first designed to frighten St. John by threats and imprisonment, he now thought, that he might tempt him by bestowing upon him great favors. He sent one of the most distinguished gentlemen of his court to lead John from the dungeon, to assure him, that the king was kindly disposed towards him, to entreat him to forget what had happened, and to invite him to dine at the royal table on the following day. John knew well that this was only a new snare laid for him, and having reached his house, he knelt down, thanked God for his deliverance and prayed fervently for His divine assistance in the approaching danger. The next day the king received him most graciously, as if nothing had happened before, and John without showing the least resentment, sat modestly at the royal table. After dinner the king dismissed all the other guests, that he might have a private interview with John, and he again told him, that he alone was able to relieve his heart by communicating to him what the queen had confessed; he begged him to have pity on his king, and declared that he would not reveal what was told him, but that he might expect the most severe punishment, if he continued to disobey his royal commands. John, however, replied: "I will not violate the laws of my Church, even to win a kingly crown; I am ready rather to die the death of a martyr."

Wenceslas no longer restrained his rage; he sent immediately for the executioner and his assistants, and what more than a thousand years ago had only been done by heathen emperors, was now in the year 1383, after Christ done by a Christian king. Because a holy priest refused to commit a great sin, he was put to the rack and his naked body burned with torches. John did not murmur, and the only words he uttered, were the names of Jesus and Mary. Horribly tortured and nearly dead he was at last taken from the rack and left

lying on the floor of the dungeon without any assistance. Meanwhile the queen had been informed of the infamous action of her husband; she hastened to him, threw herself at his feet, appeased his anger by her entreaties and tears, and succeeded in obtaining the release of her confessor. Wenceslas was already hated by his subjects, and after he had vented his passion, he was afraid of exciting the vengeance of the people: he wished also to spare the life of the priest, because he still hoped to make him yield to his wicked request. John concealed what he had suffered, because he would not increase the hatred of the people against the king, and because he was satisfied, that God knew, what he had suffered for His sake. He lived a very secluded life until he had recovered, and then entered upon his clerical duties with the same zeal he had shown before his imprisonment. The third Sunday after Easter he chose as the text of his sermon, the passage: "A little while and now you shall not see me," and preaching with wonderful eloquence he spoke in a prophetic spirit of the great visitations that were to come upon Bohemia, bade a solemn farewell to his numerous hearers and begged their pardon, if he had ever wronged them. Seventeen years after this sermon, Bohemia was horribly devastated by a war with the Hussites, but only seventeen days after he had preached it, the forebodings of St. John's heart in regard to his own person were fulfilled.

One evening, as he was returning from a pilgrimage he had made to a shrine of the Mother of God, at some distance from Prague, he perceived the king standing at a window of the palace; satan suddenly enkindled all the jealousy, suspicion and hatred, that filled the heart of Wenceslas. In his wild rage he ordered St. John to be immediately brought before him, and when he entered the room, he thus addressed him: "Tremble, priest, for if you do not immediately reveal all that the queen confessed, I swear before God, that you shall be thrown into the river." As all remonstrances would have been vain, John imitated the example of his Saviour before the judges, and made no reply. This silence only increased the rage of the tyrant; he commanded the soldiers to take John out of his sight, guard him until night, and then drown him in the Moldaw. This order was carried out; during the night the executioners led the Saint upon the bridge, tied his hands and feet, and then threw him into the river. This event occurred on the Vigil of the Ascension.

St. John had hardly expired, when many brilliant lights, like stars, were seen hovering over his body. The Moldaw flows through the city of Prague, and many people had assembled together who looked in astonishment at the fire upon the surface of the water, not knowing what to make of it. The queen also, who as yet knew nothing of the death of her confessor, saw the strange sight from her window and she hastened to the king to tell him what she had seen. Wenceslas, too, perceived the fiery light that remained over the drowned body, and he was seized with terror; he retired immediately to his room and for three days no one was admitted to his presence.

We will not attempt to describe the excitement or tumult among the people, when the event became known the next day ; it is sufficient for us to know, that St. John was soon venerated as a Saint by the people, and that God confirmed this veneration by many miracles.

We may yet see the magnificent tomb of the holy St. John, made entirely of silver, in the Church of Hradschin at Prague ; thousands of children in Bohemia and Germany are called by the name of this Saint and on numberless bridges his statue is placed in honor of his martyrdom ;—while the memory of king Wenceslas is accursed—for ever. This tyrant had at last to submit to the disgrace of being deposed and imprisoned ; he however escaped, but died in an epileptic fit without being reconciled with his Lord and Creator.

The death which St. John Nepomucene suffered, because he would not violate the seal of confession, is however in itself no proof of particular holiness, it may be regarded rather as the reward of a holy life. A priest can not die a more beautiful death, than to be permitted to die as a martyr. Any true priest would likewise rather die, than disclose what had been confessed to him ; and it is certainly a miracle, that among the millions of priests, who have heard confessions from the very first ages of Christianity, not a single one is known to have revealed what had been confessed to him. The most wicked priests, and even those who have become apostates, guard the secrets of the confessional, and it seems to be especially protected by God, in order that no one may be deterred from frequenting the only source where the sinner can find forgiveness. It is therefore a great and inexcusable sin, if a person hesitates or fears to make a sincere and complete confession to a priest ; such a person only prefers to be disgraced hereafter in the presence of men and angels at the last judgment.

What we have said in regard to the sanctity of the confessional, is certainly known to every catholic, whose religious education has not been neglected ; but some of them seem to forget that, if it is the solemn duty of the confessor to keep secret the sins of his penitents, the Catholic also has duties to fulfill in this regard. It is a great sin to overhear the confession of others, if perhaps the penitent or confessor speak too loud ; honor and duty require them to leave the vicinity of the confessional, and if by chance they have overheard any thing to keep it as secret as the confessor does himself. Catholics should never repeat what the confessor has spoken to them in the confessional ; his remarks were intended for *them* alone and had reference to the state of *their* souls, and it is their duty, to meditate upon them in secret and with humility, but not to make them a subject for idle talk. It is also a great sin for Catholics to speak with contempt of their confessor or to criticize his questions or remarks, because he he can not defend himself. Those who act thus, wound with sharp weapons a defenceless man, the spiritual father, whom God has given them, and if he was permitted to defend himself, it would soon be found, that his words have been



permitted or that the irregularity, indiscretion or haughtiness displayed in the confession made to him, obliged him to admonish them severely.

Many years after the death of St. John Nepomucene, when an examination of his body was made, it was found entirely decomposed, with the exception of the tongue, which was in a miraculous state of preservation. If God performed such wonders and signs on the tongues of all according to their merit, we should find in the mouth of many a corpse not a tongue but a two-edged knife, a fire-brand or a venomous serpent.

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### ST. PASCHAL BAYLON.

(April 17.)

"Simplicity"

ST. PASCHAL once wrote on a paper: "We cannot discern separate parts in God on account of His perfect indivisibility, so that His substance is power, His power will, His will omniscience, His omniscience wisdom, His wisdom goodness, His goodness justice, and His justice mercy." Thus also every Saint as a true child of God, cultivates the virtue of simplicity, and although worldly minded people may say, that it is necessary to possess great skill to gain a livelihood, yet our Saviour says: "Be simple as doves," and tells us to take a child as a model of simplicity. The true Christian therefore will not listen to the precepts of the world, but to the words spoken by our Saviour. The life of St. Paschal, whose memory we commemorate to-day, will exhibit the beauty and loveliness of Christian simplicity.

St. Paschal, born in Spain, was the child of an honest farmer. It is a remarkable fact, that Paschal when still an infant and unable to walk, crept several times into the Church, so that his parents, alarmed at his absence, sought for him through the whole village, and only found him there. During his boyhood, when occupied in tending the cattle, he manifested a very pious disposition, and out of love to the poverty of Jesus, he desired also to be very poor, and would therefore never wear shoes, but accompanied his flock bare-footed through bushes and thorns, over rocks and stony paths.

Sometimes his tender conscience was very much disturbed, because he could not prevent the goats of his flock from feeding on the fields of others, and his pious soul was frequently saddened by the quarrels of the other herdsmen. Some of his acquaintances advised him to join the brotherhood of a neighboring monastery, the inmates of which lived in the enjoyment of large revenues, but Paschal remarked, that this was contrary to his design, for he wished to

live in Evangelic poverty and not in luxury. A gentleman who had no children was very much pleased with the young shepherd and wished to adopt him and make him heir of his whole estate, but Paschal thanked him for his kindness, and refused the offer, because he had determined to serve God in poverty, and declared that if he were rich, he would give away his possessions and join a religious order.

Praying daily for divine light to guide him how best to serve God, it was revealed to him, that he should join the order of Saint Francis. He bade farewell to parents, brothers, and sisters, and set out in quest of a convent belonging to this order. His brothers who were upright men, wished to arrange with him for his share of the estate, but he declared that he would never claim any thing after the death of his parents, and he took nothing with him but a piece of bread and a gourd filled with water. He directed his steps towards Valencia, where the Franciscans had a convent.

As he was an entire stranger in that city, he could not expect to be immediately received into the convent, and he therefore again became a shepherd. His conscience was so tender that neither persuasion nor ridicule could turn him from the straight path pointed out by the Gospel. He always repaired the injury done by his flock out of his wages, even if the damage amounted to but a trifling sum. To those who mocked at his honesty, he replied: "Little things can also lead men to hell." He often assisted the people in mowing, through whose fields his flock had passed, without accepting any return for his labor.

After several years had elapsed, Paschal inquired at the convent, if they were willing to receive him as a member of their order, and as his great piety and virtue were already known, they received him gladly, and at once made him door-keeper. Several women once came to the convent for the purpose of making their confession, but the guardian ordered the door-keeper to tell them that he was absent. Paschal, although always modest and obedient, said to his superior: "I will tell them, that you are occupied and can not come." "Not at all," said the guardian; "tell them, that I am not at home." "Pardon me, father," replied Paschal, "but I shall not say so, for it would be a lie and a great sin."

Paschal's motto, and one to which he faithfully adhered during his whole life, was: "Towards God the heart of a child, towards our neighbor the heart of a mother, towards ourselves the heart of a judge." He accustomed the poor, among whom he distributed food, to kneel down and pray with him before and after their meal, and his own share of meat he always put it secretly aside and gave to a poor old man, whom he thus supported for years. Sometimes when he had distributed all the alms, it grieved him his heart, that he was forced to send some of the poor away without any thing, he therefore gave them flowers from the garden, comforting them with sweet and friendly words, begging them to have patience until he was able to give them more, and certainly a flower pre-

sented in such a spirit gave more joy to the poor, than a piece of money given to them by a rich man in a rude manner.

Once the guardian of the convent reproached him with his prodigality, as he called it; he said, that if too many poor presented themselves, it was not necessary to give alms to all; but Paschal replied in his Christian simplicity: "Yet if there are twelve poor and I give only to ten of them, Jesus Christ might be one of those whom I refused."

The virtue of simplicity made brother Paschal patient and submissive, when others would have felt vexed and angry. He was once reprimanded by the guardian undeservedly, before all the inmates of the convent, for priding himself too much on his sanctity, to which Paschal made no reply, but with a countenance as serene as before, he retired again to the performance of his duties. One of the brothers wished to console him and told him to bear what had been said, in patience; but Paschal replied: "I know, brother, that the Holy Ghost spoke through the mouth of our guardian."

He gave a similar answer, when he had broken a dish, and his superior commanded him to wear around his neck the broken pieces strung together as a punishment. One of the brothers, whose heart was filled with pity, expressed himself openly at the guardian's severity, but Paschal immediately interrupted him by saying: "Do not mention it, I received his words as if spoken by the Holy Ghost."

Paschal possessed the peace and joy of the Holy Ghost to such a degree, that his heart was like a heaven, always pure and serene, in which his soul rejoiced in singing the praises of God. He could not conceal the happiness of his heart; his countenance was always lit up by a smile, and when walking or working, he was always heard singing Psalms in a low voice. As a child communicates to every one it meets the cause of its joy, so also did Paschal tell the brothers of the great joy which filled his heart, and he frequently remarked to them: "All is good, that comes from God; my love is crucified."

His child-like simplicity of heart once manifested itself in a manner that may perhaps appear ridiculous to the common reader, but lovely and even touching to those who have a sense of the beauty of Christian simplicity, especially when they consider that Paschal lived a very self-denying life and allowed himself no worldly pleasure. Over the entrance of the dining hall was a picture of our Lord; one day Paschal who thought himself alone in the hall, unable to control the overflowing fulness of his spiritual joy, began to dance before it, until interrupted by the entrance of a brother. Thus also had David danced before the ark.

The simplicity of St. Paschal was not caused by any want of intellectual power—for he spoke with uncommon wisdom on religious subjects—but was owing to his purity and holiness of heart, and he therefore frequently accomplished more than others possessed of great learning and skill. The guardian



once sent an eloquent preacher of the Order to effect a reconciliation between two citizens, who were at enmity, and Paschal was deputed to accompany him. One of the citizens became so excited by the exhortations of the preacher, that he was on the point of striking him, when Paschal spoke the simple words: "Brother forgive the wrong for the sake of God." Immediately the citizen's anger was appeased and he said to the priest: "Father, I forgive him for the love of God; all shall be done, as you desire." Upon another occasion several influential and learned men had in vain endeavored to persuade a youth, not to revenge himself on the murderer of his father. Paschal met the youth and by a few simple words succeeded in making him promise to renounce all desire of vengeance, and he kept his word, although many opportunities of taking revenge afterwards offered.

St. Paschal never began any thing without first praying to God for His advice and for a manifestation of His will. The guardian once ordered him to write a letter on a matter of importance, to the governor of the province, with whom Paschal was high in favor. He took the paper and went to his cell, and a little while after, when the guardian wished to see whether he had finished it, he found him on his knees, holding the paper in his clasped hands and praying, that God might guide his pen and dictate what to write.

The remarks of Paschal on prayer are simple and at the same time profound. He said: "Since God has a great desire to bestow upon us His grace, we should have confidence as often as we pray, that God will grant what we ask. God waits until we ask, and animates us Himself to ask; since then God rejoices in granting what we pray for, this divine pleasure in granting must be a higher motive to cause us to pray, than desire for the thing we ask. Let us turn our hearts from the things of this world when we pray, and imagine, that there is nothing in the world but God and our soul, and then pray with love, with earnestness, and confidence." How great a difference exists between false piety and true godliness was distinctly shown in the simplicity of St. Paschal. For instance, many persons are very scrupulous about trifles and thereby show that they do not possess a child-like confidence in God. Paschal was perfectly free from such scruples, which he called "fears of the conscience." Many persons when about to receive Holy Communion have their hearts filled with sadness instead of joy; but Paschal, on the contrary, whenever he approached the table of the Lord, exhibited in his countenance the love, joy, and peace that filled his whole being.

Although very compassionate towards his fellow-men, Paschal was very severe to himself; he fasted much oftener than was prescribed, allowed himself but a few hours rest, and frequently scourged himself. This was the case especially on days when the Church celebrated the feast of a Martyr, partly, to feel in his person some of the pain endured by the martyr, partly to offer to God the pain he suffered instead of the martyrdom, which he would gladly have undergone for the sake of God.

Perfectly faithful to his vow of poverty, he restricted himself in every thing not indispensable ; the first habit he received on joining the order he wore to the time of his death. By constant patching, it had become so stiff and hard that it stood on the floor, as if made of wood.

The furniture of his cell consisted of a wooden crucifix, a picture of the Blessed Virgin on paper, a small table and a wooden block, that served him both for chair and pillow ; his bed consisted of a mattress of reeds and a coverlet made of pieces of cloth and leather sewed together ; he generally ate no bread, but the crumbs that were left in the sack, in which the alms had been collected, and he exhorted his brethren to avoid all waste, and not even to spill a drop of oil, since having made the vow of poverty, it was wrong to squander the holy alms.

Truly perfect as was St. Paschal in imitating the poverty of Christ, he also imitated His temperance, chastity, patience, humility, love, and devotion ; but as it is our intention to speak only of the beautiful simplicity of his saintly character, we will pass on to the last days of his happy life upon earth.

When God had revealed to him his approaching death, he could not conceal his joy, and in the church during Mass, he would burst forth into great rejoicing and divine praises ; and when he met his friends and benefactors in the street, he would embrace them and bid them a joyful farewell. He finally became dangerously ill ; when in health he would never allow another person, according to the custom of the order, to wash his feet ; on the last day, however, of his sickness he begged in friendly humility brother Alphonso to go for some warm water and to wash his feet. Alphonso, astonished at his demand, asked him, why he acted so contrary to his usual habit ; but Paschal replied : " I shall receive extreme unction to-day, and wish to have my feet clean." And so it happened ; the guardian seeing the critical condition of Paschal, ordered him to be taken into the Infirmary and the holy sacraments administered. After St. Paschal had received them with great devotion, he breathed his last in peace and joy—uttering three times the name of *Jesus*. He died on Pentecost-Sunday in the year 1592, just as the bells were ringing at the elevation of the Host.

## ST. THEODOTUS.

(May 18.)

"Power of the will"

In the third century after Christ the Christians of Ancyra, a city in Asia Minor, were cruelly persecuted. One of them, by the name of Victor was imprisoned and told to choose between the worship of idols or death. A friend called on him in the prison and exhorted him most fervently not to deny Christ, and strengthened by the consoling words of Theodotus, he at first endured with firmness the torments of the rack, but when he was almost in possession of the crown of martyrdom, he called out to the executioners and begged them to cease torturing him, as he wished to confer once more with the judge. Covered with wounds he was taken back to his dungeon, where he soon afterwards expired; but as it is not certain, whether he died an apostate, or was faithful to Christ, he is not venerated as a martyr by the Church.

Theodotus had once in the night-time secretly buried the bodies of seven virgins who had suffered martyrdom, an act that greatly provoked the heathen magistrate. Wherever a Christian was found in the city, he was seized and put to the rack, in order to extort from him who had taken away and buried the bodies of the martyrs. Theodotus intended to deliver himself up and to declare that he had committed the deed; but his friends did not permit him to do so. A Christian, called Polychronius disguised himself as a peasant in order to gather information concerning the affair; but he was recognized, seized, and put to the rack. In the beginning he suffered courageously, but when they threatened him with death, his firmness gave way, and he confessed, that Theodotus had buried the bodies of the virgins, and pointed out the place where they could be found. Theodotus was informed of this, before he was summoned to appear at the tribunal; he bade farewell to his brethren, begged them to pray for him, and prepared for the great step he was soon to take. Some of them endeavored to persuade him to leave the city, but Theodotus said: "If you are my friends, go to the judge and tell him, that I am waiting at the door."

When Theodotus was led into the judgment-hall, the rack, a pan of fire, and other implements of torture were already set in order, but the judge declared that the accused should be exempt from all punishment, if he would deny the crucified Jesus, and he made him such splendid offers, that those present congratulated the accused on his good fortune. Theodotus however frankly replied: "What is related of the deeds of your gods is so wicked and shameful, that your own laws condemn them. Our God Jesus Christ, on the contrary, is all purity, and His divinity is proved by many prophecies and by great miracles."

This answer exasperated the judge and the heathens, who filled the hall and



the former ordered Theodotus to be immediately placed upon the rack, and in his rage even rose from his chair to assist the executioner; they tore the flesh of Theodotus with iron hooks, poured vinegar into the wounds and burned them with torches; he however bore all as firmly and calmly, as though he had not given up his own body to be tortured, but that of another person, for he lost sight of his own sufferings in meditating upon those of his Saviour. As Theodotus still refused to deny Christ, although stretched upon the rack, the judge ordered them to beat his face with stones and dash out his teeth; but the martyr said: "You may also order my tongue to be cut out, but God will hear his people, even if they cannot speak." By order of the judge Theodotus was led from the judgment hall and placed in a dungeon, in order to give him a second trial. To the people who had gathered in the street to see the man, who had been so terribly treated, the martyr said: "Recognize in me the miraculous power of Christ, who gave me the strength to bear such tortures; but it is only our duty to offer Him such sacrifices, since He was the first to suffer for each of us."

Five days after, Theodotus was again led before the tribunal, and promises and threats employed to shake his faith in Christ; he was told that the torture he had already suffered would be nothing in comparison with what awaited him, if he did not worship the idols; but Theodotus replied: "You can devise nothing that is stronger, than the power of my Lord Jesus Christ." The judge now made use of all the torments he could invent; orders were given to tear open again the wounds that had already commenced to close, they rolled him upon burning coals, and as even these satanic cruelties could not shake the firmness of Theodotus, the judge at last sentenced him to be beheaded and his body to be burned, to prevent the Christians from burying it. Arrived at the place of execution, the suffering Saint began to pray aloud: "Lord Jesus Christ, Creator of heaven and earth, Thou who dost not forsake those who hope in Thee, I thank Thee, that Thou hast honored me by making me a citizen of Thy kingdom; I thank Thee, that Thou hast strengthened me to overcome Satan; give rest to Thy servants and let the rage and madness of the enemy cease at my death; give peace to Thy Church and deliver her from the power of Satan." To the Christian witnesses he said: "My brethren mourn not, but praise our Lord Jesus Christ, who has permitted me to finish my course and to conquer the enemy of my salvation. I will also, when in heaven, pray with confidence to God in your behalf." He then joyfully received the fatal stroke, that opened to his soul the gates of the kingdom of heaven.

We have placed before you, dear reader, the examples of three Christians, who for their faith were called before a heathen tribunal. All three in the beginning had determined to die for Christ, but only one of them, Theodotus, persevered to the end in his holy resolution; the two others, Victor and Polychronius yielded to the persuasions of the judge. Whence then this difference, since

the Church teaches us that to every one is given as much grace as is necessary for him to possess? The difference lies in the co-operation of man himself with the grace of God, in his own free will. Free will, however, is like grace itself, something mysterious, and is impenetrable in its real nature; but we know, that it grows strong by exercising it, and on the contrary grows weak and yields to every strong temptation the less it is exercised in wrestling and struggling for virtue. This truth is verified in the life of St. Theodotus; he was obliged to suffer more and longer than Victor or Polychronius, but nevertheless he gave no sign of weakness as they did, for he had always led a life that had strengthened and prepared him for such a struggle. Theodotus had been an inn-keeper, not for the purpose of gaining wealth, but that he might have better opportunities for assisting Christians during their persecution; his house was an asylum for the persecuted, he was according to the expression of St. Paul, "all to all;" he supported the poor and tended the sick, he animated and encouraged Christians to undergo the sufferings of martyrdom, and he buried the faithful, who had fallen victims to the rage of their enemies, although it was forbidden to do so under the pain of death. From his earliest youth he had been so pious and virtuous, that God endowed him with the grace of healing both the body and the soul; many sick persons recovered by his praying over them, and many sinners were led back to the path of virtue by his exhortations. He regarded poverty as preferable to riches, if not devoted to charitable purposes, and a fondness for amusements as incompatible with the resolutions of a Christian to live for Christ. No wonder, then, that such a man stood firm to the last.

Perhaps, dear reader, you imagine, that it would be impossible for you, in time of trial, to resist temptation; but this feeling of weakness is owing to some fault of your own; for it may be that your previous life has not been one of preparation. Those, for instance, who do not try to bear with Christian mildness and patience the little vexations of daily life, will certainly think that they can not refrain from giving way to anger, that it would be impossible for them to forgive those who offend and slander them. So it is in regard to other sins; remember that if God grants you long life, many difficult trials and temptations may still be in wait for you, and they will certainly overcome you, if you are not prepared before hand to meet them. Endeavor therefore to become strong and firm; every day, nay every hour, gives you opportunity to resist improper inclinations and desires, of bearing with troubles, of meeting and overcoming adversities, or in other words, every day and every hour offers you occasions of conquering *yourself*. The oftener, the more faithfully, the more perseveringly you do this, the better are you prepared, the more certain are you of gaining the victory, whereas the virtue of those who live in the indulgence of their passions, who squander their physical and intellectual strength in the enjoyment of worldly pleasures, is like a house built of cards—the least touch, the slightest trial or temptation causes their downfall.

## BLESSED EMILIANA.

(May 19.)

"Silence."

EMILIANA was the daughter of a citizen of Florence, and married in her sixteenth year. Through an intimate acquaintance with a pious relative, she became very zealous in the practice of her religion; she never appeared fashionably dressed unless in obedience to the wish of her husband; she was so charitably disposed towards the poor, that she denied herself many things, to give them away; as she was occupied during the day with the concerns of her house, she spent a part of the night in working for the poor. Attacked by a painful disease, she was never heard to murmur or complain, but always gave praise and thanks to God, and when one of her children was taken sick, she did not lament as mothers usually do, but said: "I would rather have my child die, if such is the will of God, and reach heaven in purity, than live longer and perhaps offend God."

Emiliana was but twenty-two years old, when her husband died, and her family importuned her very much to marry again; but convinced, that it was better to serve God in a single state, she said: "I have espoused one who will never leave me a widow, and I will not marry another, I would rather choose a funeral pile than marry again." Her own father defrauded her of the estate her husband had left her, and as she was thus without the means of gratifying her charitable inclinations, she visited the houses of the rich, to solicit alms for the poor. The life she led during her widowhood was that of a perfect Christian; all her thoughts and actions tended towards God—but it is not necessary for us to speak of her fasting and watching, of her sincere devotion, by which she obtained so many graces from God, how many by reason of her exhortations gave up a life of sin and embraced one of virtue, or of her humility and meekness—we will speak only of one quality for which she was especially distinguished, and which is so seldom found either in widows or others who imagine themselves to be very pious—we mean the commendable virtue of *silence*.

Not only during the forty days of Lent, but also for forty days before Christmas, and three days of every week, Emiliana kept perfect silence and never spoke unless required to do so by circumstances. Every Saturday she received Holy Communion, and wishing to avoid all unnecessary conversation on her way to church, she entreated her companion not to speak to her; for she said: "God is everywhere and willingly enters all susceptible hearts; therefore if you wish to please me, do not disturb me by vain words, for God is as much with me now, as when I pray alone in my chamber; I must therefore keep silence out of reverence to the Lord, whom I am about to receive."

Emiliana so much disliked the idle conversation of worldly-minded people,



that she would sometimes place cotton in her ears; and if she could not avoid conversing with others, she began generally by saying: "Let us only speak of God." It was her wish to live imprisoned in a tower, or on an unfrequented mountain, or in a wilderness; but since this could not be, she followed faithfully the advice which she once gave to a person, who likewise desired to live in solitude. She said: "Regard the world as a wood, and the people of the world as the beasts of the wood; bear every thing in patience and silence; weep on account of the past, be grateful to God for the present, and think of the future."

In regard to useless conversation we can simply say: A Christian will not talk unnecessarily, because he should detest vain and idle words, and he who is not a Christian should not talk foolishly, because it distracts and corrupts him still more. We can not imagine how a truly Christian soul takes pleasure in always talking. When we see a pious person very talkative, we cannot but suspect his piety of not being pure gold. He who earnestly endeavors to lead a life pleasing to God, must especially guard against vain and useless conversations. How frequently do we hear persons accuse themselves of distraction in their prayers, yet declare that it was not their fault, because against their will worldly thoughts intruded themselves upon their minds; still it is most frequently only a consequence of the useless talking in which they indulge; what they say and hear, the subjects of their idle conversation through the day take possession of their minds and rise up, when they wish to converse with God in prayer. We have ourselves felt less disposed to pray in the morning, if during the night our sleep has been disturbed by dreams of having spent our time in foolish conversation, how much the more then would we feel disturbed if in reality we had indulged vain talking. Let us accustom ourselves in general to avoid company where worldly things are spoken of and God never mentioned; let us endeavor to speak less, not to repeat what we have already said, and to consider before hand what we shall say, and then speak in a simple and precise manner. It would be a very holy custom, if on one day of every week, Friday if possible, we should resolve to speak only what is really necessary; for we should consider that the words of our Lord and Saviour were spoken for all time: "I say unto you, that every idle word that men shall speak, they shall render an account for it in the day of judgment." (Matt. 12: 36.) Emiliana had not even to account for this sin, so generally regarded by the world as insignificant; she died in the twenty-seventh year of her age, on a Saturday, at the hour when she usually received the Holy Communion. After her death she appeared to a very pious woman, named Gisla, exhorting her to perseverance and revealing to her, that she had passed through Purgatory like an innocent child without suffering any pain. During her life upon earth she enjoyed remarkable manifestations of divine grace, manifestations impossible for a person to receive who was accustomed to spend her time in idle words and trifling occupations.

We will conclude the life of the blessed Emiliana by giving an account of one of the manifestations of grace, wherewith God adorned her interior life. Her heart cherished a longing desire to behold how Jesus had looked when a child in His third or fourth year. She prayed frequently for this favor, although in her modesty she thought herself unworthy to receive so great an honor; but as St. Bernard says: "Love knows no order," Emiliana in her fervent love did not cease to pray, that the wish of her heart might be granted. As God Himself frequently inspires such holy desires in the hearts of the faithful, He is no less ready to fulfill them.

Emiliana once called to see a sick boy, and asked him: "My dear child, do you ever think of your Saviour, who suffered so much pain for your sake?" The boy replied: "Alas, I think more of my own suffering than I do of my Saviour's." "Will you give me your sickness?" asked Emiliana. "If I could do so, I would willingly," answered the boy. "May God in His mercy relieve you of your sufferings," said Emiliana—"if it will lead you to life everlasting, or else may He impose it upon me to bear." "I do not wish you to undergo all that I do,"—replied the child—"but if I could only rid myself of this pain in my side." "May your wish be granted," said Emiliana and she went home. Soon after she left, the boy was entirely free from pain in his side, and Emiliana was seized with such a terrible pain in her side, that she could scarcely breathe; but the following day the pain became somewhat less violent, and she went again to see the sick boy and said to him: "Will you not also give me the rest of your pain?" The boy gladly consented to do so, and she said again: "May it be as you wish." After her departure the boy completely recovered his health while she was attacked by his painful disease.

Emiliana was lying dangerously ill in her lonely chamber, when suddenly she beheld a wonderfully beautiful and lovely child about four years old, playing near her bed. Emiliana greatly rejoiced at this sight, and supposing him to be an angel, said to him: "Dear child, have you nothing to do but play?" The boy replied most kindly: "What else would you have me to do?" Emiliana said modestly: "I wish you to tell me some thing of the goodness of God." Then said the child: "Do you think it right for me to praise myself?" Scarcely had he spoken these words, when he disappeared and Emiliana felt herself free from all pain, and able to rise from her bed.

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## ST. BERNARDINE.

(May 20.)

"Power of preaching."

WE have before us an account of the wonderful effects produced throughout Italy by the sermons of a priest, who lived more than four hundred years ago. In Milan he adjusted many differences between the inhabitants, and in the territory of Genoa he succeeded in putting a stop to the civil war raging there. In consequence of his sermons the people of Savoy became virtuous and pious, and in Bergamo he eradicated the superstitions that reigned there, and led thousands back to the path of virtue. In the mountain tract near Switzerland the people were divided into two parties, the Guelphs and Ghibellines, who persecuted each other with great bitterness, but the holy priest of God effected a reconciliation between them. In Brescia the prevailing immorality was repressed by his sermons, and in Verona they caused such a love for the name of Jesus, that the inhabitants not only put it in golden letters upon their houses, but had it deeply implanted in their hearts. In the great commercial city of Venice he proved, that Christian justice should rule in all business transactions; in Ferrara he checked the excessive luxury and extravagance of the women, and in Florence he undeceived the inhabitants in regard to their wickedness and made them earnestly repent. In Siena, his native city, he exercised such an influence upon his fellow citizens, that they raised means to finish a church, which had been commenced long before; he induced them to burn their dice and every thing they had used in their games of chance, to which they had been passionately devoted. In memory of the blessed labors of their countryman the inhabitants of Siena caused a golden circle, containing the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to be placed on a public building in the market-place of that city. In Perugia he put an end to the bloody duels customary there, and converted the inhabitants into good Christians. In many other cities and provinces did this pious priest accomplish much that was good and great, so that he may be justly called a skilful husbandman, who cultivated the soil of Italy and sowed it with good seed.

You may perhaps think that this wonderful preacher was endowed with a powerful voice and the talent of expressing himself in rich and glowing language. This was not the case, on the contrary when he first commenced to preach, his voice was weak and hoarse and his delivery not at all eloquent. There have been many preachers before and since his time, whose sermons were far more elaborate and perfect, sermons that for their beauty have been collected and published—but of the effects they produced, we know little or nothing. How, then, did the preacher of whom we speak, accomplish so much by his sermons? The answer is, because he was a Saint. St. Bernardine was a townsman of St.



Catharine, and the descendant of a noble family; he spent his youth in great innocence and purity, so that when his school-mates were jesting and speaking immodestly, they would immediately stop as soon as Bernardine joined the group. He was still very young when Siena was visited by a pestilence, so that almost all the nurses died, and hardly any one was left to attend the afflicted. Bernardine out of love to God resolved to tend the sick, and induced several of his young friends to join him in this work of mercy. His relations reproached him for thus foolishly endangering his life and disgracing his family by such low pursuits; but Bernardine remained firm in his efforts to please God; he had labored four months in the service of the afflicted, when he himself was stricken down, but recovering he determined to devote himself entirely to the service of God, following faithfully the advice of his Saviour, when He said: "If thou wilt be perfect, go, sell what thou hast, and give to the poor; and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come follow me." (Matt. 19: 21.)

He sold his whole estate, gave the proceeds to the poor and entered the order of St. Francis; besides being strictly obedient to the rules of this austere order, he checked every disposition to sensuality by imposing upon himself severe penances; he rejoiced in humiliations and manifested the most eager zeal in order to gain souls for Christ. Some time after, his superiors invested him with the duty of preaching, and only out obedience did he assume it, for in his humility he regarded himself as totally unfit. We have already spoken of the results of his labors, but the reason of this Saint's success in leading whole cities to the path of salvation, and by his sermons moving the inhabitants of cities and districts to renounce their sinful habits and adopt a truly pious life, was not, as we have said, his great skill and eloquence as a preacher. The real cause has been made known to us by another Father of the same order. He was once asked why his sermons had not the same effect upon the people, as he was a more learned and eloquent man than Bernardine; and the preacher replied: "I may compare myself to a piece of unlighted coal, consequently when other coals approach me, they receive no warmth; Bernardine on the contrary is a coal burning with the divine spirit, so that if even dead cinders are brought in contact with him, they commence to glow and burn brightly." These few words explain why some preachers, not endowed with great natural gifts, accomplish so much good, while excellent and celebrated pulpit orators, the fame of whose eloquence attracts great crowds, make no lasting impression upon their hearers, who lavish praises upon the sermon and preacher, but nevertheless remain unconverted. These discourses lack the true spirit of eloquence, which is not always to be found in carefully arranged sentences or in well expressed language, but which is inspired by the Holy Ghost, who gives strength and power to the words of the preacher, and thus causes them to produce wonderful and beneficial results; for the same spirit that assists us to lead a holy life, assists the preacher also in his sermons.

St. Bernardine laid down the following rule for the preacher: "Seek before all things to promote the honor of God and His kingdom upon earth; be faithful to the maxims of brotherly love, strive for the sanctification of your soul, practice what you preach, and then the Holy Ghost will be your instructor. He will give your words such wisdom and power, that no one can resist them." This spirit also animated Bernardine to speak fearlessly like an Apostle; for when the Duke of Milan once threatened to put him to death, if he continued to use such bold language, Bernardine declared, that he would regard it as a great happiness to die for the truth.

As it is with a sermon, dear reader, so it is with our words of exhortation. You may, as a parent, admonish and warn your children, you may, as a teacher, speak of religion and virtue to your pupils, you may, as a Christian, desire to prevent others from doing wrong or induce them to do right;—but your words will have no effect or power, unless the Holy Ghost dwells in your heart and inspires you to speak. As the prayer of the righteous is powerful with God, so also are the words of the righteous powerful with man, and therefore, if you wish to direct others in the way of salvation, be careful first to sanctify your own soul.

St. Bernardine was several times nominated to a bishopric, a dignity which his humility forbade him to accept; his reputation and success as a preacher were however as great, as if he had been the bishop of all Italy, and he remained steadily faithful to his sacred calling to the end of his life; he was attacked with a malignant fever while on a visit to the city of Massa, and when very ill preached a beautiful sermon on "*Christian love*;" it was his last sermon. He died—lying on the bare ground like the holy founder of his order—in the year 1444, and six years after his death he was canonized as a Saint.

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## ST. GODERIC.

(May 21.)

"The Treasure hid in the Field.

WHEN we see a pedlar, no matter whether Jew or Christian, wandering about from place to place, it strikes us forcibly that MONEY is his principal and only object. Money not unfrequently becomes his idol to such a degree, that to attain it he will endanger his body and soul; his body, because he undergoes privation, danger, and fatigue, and his soul, because he lies, cheats, and entirely neglects his religious duties and all care for his future salvation.

The Saint whose blessed memory is commemorated to-day, wandered about from village to village in the county of Norfolk, England, about seven hundred years ago, selling such goods as he could procure with his small means. Goderic was very successful in his efforts, so that he was gradually enabled to increase his stock. It happened, however, that Goderic very strikingly and beautifully fulfilled the parable spoken by our Saviour. (Matt. 13 : 44-46.)

Divine grace opened the spiritual eyes of Goderic, so that he saw distinctly where a great treasure was hid, and where he could buy a very precious pearl. Like a man after God's own heart, he gave all that he had to the poor, and retired to a wilderness, where he built a hut, and lived on fruits and wild honey. His biographer says : " He led the life of a hermit, suffering hunger and thirst, cold and nakedness ; he fasted, watched, prayed, and lived thus faithfully to the end of his life in patience. Wild beasts, the threats of robbers, apparitions of evil spirits, wounds of thorns, the loneliness of the place failed to discourage him, because his perfect love overcame all fear." After Goderic had lived thus for some time, the sanctity of the hermit became gradually known, and the people from far and near visited him in crowds, where they were edified and taught the benefits of a pious life. He could not prevent them from bringing him food, but he never accepted any for his own use ; either giving it to the poor or setting it where it would serve as refreshment to those who passed through the woods. On Sundays and holidays, however, and also during three days of every week he avoided all intercourse with the world, and devoting the time entirely to prayer. In his seclusion from the world he grew so much in holiness, that God Himself manifested by miracles His delight in His faithful servant. Near the place where Goderic lived was a river, which once became so swollen, that it overflowed the whole neighborhood, including the hut of the hermit. The neighboring people hastened to the spot, believing that Goderic had perished in the inundation, and they loudly deplored his death ; but when the water had subsided and they approached the hut, they found him in prayer, and not only perfectly safe, but without the least evidence of having been in water. They asked him why he had not left as others did, when the inundation took place, and he replied, that until they told him of it, he had known nothing of the flood. Thus did God miraculously protect him, while he was in the act of praying to Him. Besides this miracle, we are also told of several cures effected by St. Goderic.

The soul of a Saint is like that of Adam or Eve before their fall ; and hence we meet with cases where animals recognize this primeval innocence. Several of the relatives of Bishop Rainulph, while on a hunt, discovering a beautiful stag, gave chase with their hounds ; the hunters sounded their horns, the hounds bayed, but the stag fled to the hut of St. Goderic, and seemed to ask for admittance by moaning in a very pitiful manner. Issuing from his hut, Goderic perceived the animal, and moved with compassion, allowed it to enter his hut,



where it lay down at his feet. The hounds returned to their masters, who, cutting their way through the bushes and brambles with their swords, found Goderic seated before the door of his hut, which he had closed at their approach. They enquired whether he had seen the stag, and Goderic, without telling a lie, replied: "God knows where he is." Apologizing for disturbing him, the hunters left. The stag remained all day in Goderic's hut, and would return to it occasionally for years, as if to express its gratitude.

In the same manner also hares and other animals sought refuge in the hut of Goderic; he always kept them until the danger was over. Birds sought shelter in his bosom during the bitter cold of the winter; they seemed to feel that Goderic was a child of their merciful Creator.

After Goderic had lived for sixty-three years in the service of his Lord, he fell dangerously ill; he suffered very much, and two brothers of a neighboring monastery were sent by their superior to nurse the dying hermit. Just before his death, his countenance assumed a most joyful expression and he began to sing; when the brothers enquired the cause of his cheerfulness, he replied: "I could not refrain from singing, for an indescribable brightness shone through the opening toward the East, and I inhaled a delicious perfume. It seemed to me as if I had arrived at the gates of the heavenly Jerusalem, and enjoyed the happiness of the angels, who were singing: KYRIE ELEISON, CHRISTE ELEISON; and I joined their chorus."

Goderic died as he had predicted, during Ascension week, in the year 1170, and thus did this humble trader find the precious pearl, to possess which he gave all that he had, and thus gained all that is worth having.

As soon as a man begins to have a clear perception of the truths of Christianity, he discovers that all, for which the worldly-minded work and toil, is but stubble, which they in their blindness mistake for gold, without comprehending that the knowledge and love of Christ is the only true gold. Some men strive with all their might for riches, some for power and fame, some find pleasure in debauchery and luxury, and others in revelry and amusements; all these may be compared with a mill in motion, where, instead of grain, only dust and sand is thrown in the hopper. Wiser are they whom the world often laughs at as fools, but who in truth are Saints.

May it be the will of God, dear reader, that we may all seek, find, and preserve THE TREASURE IN THE FIELD, THE PEARL OF GREAT PRICE, THE REAL GOLD OF LIFE! Amen.

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## ST. HUMILITAS.

(May 22.)

"The Guardian Angel."

HUMILITAS was the only daughter of very wealthy parents, who regretted extremely to see her in early youth despise all the comforts and pleasures of life, but they were still more grieved, when she declared her intention of becoming a nun. In the year 1241, Faventia in Italy, her native city, was taken by the emperor Frederic, and a relative of the emperor having heard of her great beauty, sought her hand: but she positively refused to marry. She subsequently appears to have yielded to the command of her parents, for she married a man of distinction in her native city. She lived with him nine years, although she frequently besought him to permit her to enter a convent; the husband, however, ridiculed her request and declared, that he would never consent. But falling dangerously ill, he promised to place no obstacle in the way. After his recovery Humilitas entered a convent and he himself joined a religious order. At that time Humilitas was not thirty years of age, yet her deportment was so saintly, that she seemed to have spent her whole life in the depths of solitude and holy seclusion. From the very first she was a model to the other nuns by refraining from idle words, by constant prayer and her eagerness to serve the sick and the well, and in taking upon herself all kinds of difficult and troublesome work; her heart was continually occupied with the Passion of Christ, and once when its contemplation caused her to shed bitter tears, she found, on wiping them away, that she had shed tears of blood. When Humilitas was chosen abbess, her reputation for sanctity was so great, that many of the most distinguished families sent their daughters to the convent to have them under her excellent care.

Humilitas was endowed with the miraculous gift of seeing when penitents from a sense of shame had concealed their greatest sins from their confessor, and by her pious exhortations she always succeeded in persuading them to make a complete and sincere confession. She was also favored with revelations, many of which she caused to be written down. In a work dictated by herself she asserts, that not only had a guardian-angel been assigned to her at the time of her birth, but that after her election as abbess, when the care of many had been committed to her charge, a second angel was given her, in order to guide her in the management of her affairs. She says in this regard: "I love all the heavenly angels, but there are two, who are especially dear to me, who day and night assist me and communicate to me inestimable gifts from the treasures of their riches. Our Lord gave them to me as protectors, to guard me against all evils; and this divine charge they have executed most carefully until this moment, for by their power I have become perfectly strengthened. They support me as it were on my right hand and on my left, and I cannot fall but by my

own negligence. I have been honored also with the knowledge of their names : the first belongs to the number of those angels, who are assigned to man as their protectors during life ; his name is Sapiel, meaning divine wisdom, and as often as I hear his name pronounced, my heart is always gladdened. He was with me from the moment of my birth, but I acknowledge, that I have frequently offended him through my fault, but he being truly kind, forgave me and was always my intercessor with the Lord Jesus. The other is called Emmanuel, and is one of the Cherubim ; he was assigned to me after I had reached my thirtieth year, when I entered upon the discharge of new and important duties, as God confided to me the care of a flock and I did not possess the strength or talent necessary to fill so great a dignity ; but my dear angel assists me in my labors and troubles, and as he is kind, he comforts me and gives me out of the abundance of his great treasures.

My heart is filled with joy, when I think of the nobility and greatness of my two guardian angels ; but when I consider their beauty, then am I enraptured, and almost beside myself with happiness, because I have two such perfect friends who always stand in the presence of God, and because I enjoy their powerful assistance. They are like two invincible rocks, my whole safety is entrusted to them, and their power is so great, that I am not afraid to wrestle with every possible enemy ; they are very wise and so zealous, that they instruct me in the knowledge of all virtues." "Oh ! dear and powerful angels guard all my ways and watch carefully that the enemy may not enter the portal of my heart ; brandish before me the sword of your defence and keep my mouth closed, that no vain and idle word may escape therefrom ! Sharpen my tongue, that it may eradicate sin and sow virtue ; place upon my eyes the two seals of love, that they may not look upon the things of this world, but at my beloved Lord : keep them open, that I may be always awake and ready to pray and sing His praises ! Keep my ears open that they may hear the name of Jesus, and let not a word enter that would be a poison to my soul. Fetter my feet with the chains of love, that they may not walk in the path of sin, but that all my steps may be taken in honor of Christ and of His glorious mother. Fasten my hands to your blessed wings, that are always extended and ready to execute the divine orders. Let me not relish vanity, so that my soul may only taste the sweetness of the heavenly flowers ; guard my bodily senses in such a manner, that my spiritual senses may delight in, and my soul commune with its Beloved. Assist me in making my heart so strong, that the waves of temptation may never overleap its barriers. My Guardian Angels, I am confided to your care by my most sweet and loving Jesus ; I pray you in His name, to have a watchful care over me ; I recommend myself to you. O my kind and holy angels, entreat the Eternal Word to draw my heart to Him, and not to permit it ever to be separated from Him. O Emmanuel ! O Sapiel, my Guardian-Angels ! I pray you, assist me with all your power, lead me into the presence of the great Queen,



that I may behold the Mother with her beloved Son and be permitted to take into my arms the glorious Infant from His mother's bosom!"

The doctrine of the Church, that every one has his guardian angel, has been confirmed by the testimony of many Saints, who in the purified state of their souls were enabled to see the angels, who had them in charge. Every man is as unable as an infant to foresee the dangers that threaten both soul and body, and therefore the heavenly Father appoints certain spirits, endowed with a high degree of wisdom and power, to guard human beings committed to their care against all evils from which man cannot preserve himself. There is no father or mother, who bestows so much faithful love and care upon a child as his guardian angel does; for the love of parents is a natural love and is rooted in flesh and blood, while the love of the guardian angel is a heavenly one, and on that account more noble, deep, and enlightened.

Now, dear reader, how have you manifested your gratitude towards your benefactor, who for years has followed you silently and invisibly? Perhaps a year has elapsed without your having once thought of your guardian angel, who has never for a moment relaxed his watchful care over you; perhaps your ingratitude has been carried still further, for you may not only have grieved him a thousand times, by indulging in wicked thoughts, words, and actions, but you may have forced him long ago to leave your side by committing sins, unfit for an angel to witness. In fact there are persons who seem to have completely fallen into the power of Satan and who are entirely under the dominion of one of his spirits. If you have reason to fear that your guardian angel has forsaken you, call him back as soon as possible; for as a sincere confession brings back the divine grace, so also will the guardian angel joyfully return to the repentant sinner; but we have yet another question to ask, and that is: have you not reason to fear the accusations of children? We all know, that children have their guardian angels. Now, have you never in the presence of a child and of his guardian angel spoken and behaved, so as to scandalize the soul of the child and compelled his angel to turn aside his face from very shame? Remember what our Saviour says: "But he that shall scandalize one of these little ones that believe in me, it were better for him that a mill-stone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea. Take heed that you despise not one of these little ones: for I say to you, that their angels in heaven always see the face of my Father who is in heaven." (Matt. 18 : 6, 10.

May the life of St. Humilitas reawaken in you the remembrance of what you owe your guardian angel. Think often of his presence, and always act as you should do in the presence of a heavenly prince. Listen to his warnings and admonitions; pay particular respect to children and to pious persons, because they are always invisibly accompanied by another exalted person; be more grateful to your guardian angel, honor him as you would a kind and powerful friend, implore him not to forsake you, and to be always your intercessor. If

you think of him with gratitude, it will certainly be more agreeable for him to assist you. Make this resolution then: "I promise henceforth to think of my guardian-angel."

## ST. DESIDERIUS.

(May 23.)

"Judgment and Punishment in this world."

UNDER the old law, God made promises for this life, rewarding and punishing men according to their merits, even in this world. The new testament, however, opened to man a more extended prospect, raising his eyes to eternity, and teaching him to look for his reward in the next world. Yet from time to time the visible judgment of God falls upon such persons as live in open defiance of His divine laws, and the Almighty shows, in a manner not to be mistaken, to those who are weak and wavering in matters of faith, that an omniscient and just God rules over the world. It happens, for instance, that a sudden death often overtakes the perjurer, the blasphemer, or drunkard. Such manifestations of the judgments of God have already been twice placed before the reader in the lives of this month: the one that fell upon the murderer of St. Stanislaus, (May 7,) and the one that overtook the murderer of St. John Nepomucene, (May 16). In the life of the Saint whose feast we celebrate to-day, we meet with another instance of punishment that visited one whose days were spent in vice.

King Sigisbert of Burgundy, was assassinated as he was on the point of going to war with his brother, and Brunehilde, the wife of the murdered king, is said to have lived in unlawful connection with the son of her brother-in-law. At that time, St. Desiderius was Archbishop of Vienne, the capital of the kingdom, and as he was a true priest of God, he could not and dared not pass over in silence the wickedness of Brunehilde, especially as she was guilty also of other heinous crimes. He, therefore, publicly reproached the queen for her sins, because she had given public scandal to the people; but the reproof of St. Desiderius was as distasteful to her as was the opposition of Elias to Jezabel, and the reproach of John to Herodias. She raised up false witnesses against the archbishop, and St. Desiderius was banished.

As God upheld Joseph in Egypt, so He now comforted and assisted St. Desiderius. One Sunday, when Desiderius, going into the chapel, lighted the lamp before the altar to say his breviary, it continued to burn the whole week without the oil or wick being renewed. This miracle became known, and the

people of the neighboring places hastened to the spot to convince themselves of what they had heard. Many sick people also came to the chapel to be anointed by Desiderius with the oil of the lamp, and they recovered their health; a leper even was suddenly cured in this manner. Other miracles occurred, the fame of which spread far and wide among the people, and the queen perceived with great displeasure that in banishing the archbishop, she had only contributed to increase the fame of his sanctity. She therefore recalled the archbishop, and Desiderius on his return was received by the people of Vienne with great joy and exultation.

But when a woman turns her back on religion, her hatred is more malignant and lasts longer than that of a man. The great veneration which the people had shown the holy archbishop on his return to the city only increased her desire to wreak her vengeance upon him, and she induced an officer of rank to molest in every way the archbishop and his clergy. The reigning king Derrie was still unmarried, and as he had a high esteem for the archbishop, he asked his advice whether he should marry or remain single. Under the circumstances Desiderius advised the king to marry, and seized upon this opportunity to speak of the punishments that would follow upon an unchaste life. These words exasperated the queen still more; she dreaded to lose the influence she had always maintained over Derrie, and which led her constantly to dissuade him from marrying. She now declared, that Desiderius wished to deprive her of her son's love, and at the same time interpreted his remarks on adultery as aimed particularly at her. She was determined to be rid of the obnoxious archbishop at any price, and accordingly persuaded three of her courtiers to waylay and kill him wherever they found him. They followed the archbishop for that purpose, and met him near a village. Desiderius, forewarned of their wicked design, was prepared to die the death of a martyr; he knelt down and awaited the fatal stroke in silent prayer. One of the murderers struck the archbishop upon the head with a large stone, so that he fell to the ground; but as this did not kill him, another gave him a blow with a wooden club, that crushed his skull.

When Clotaire, king of France, was informed of the murder of the saintly archbishop of Vienne, he was filled with indignation against Brunchilde, and resolved to arrest her. His soldiers succeeded in capturing her, and delivered her up. Clotaire then assembled the nobles of his kingdom, in order to judge her for the murder she had committed, and for the other crimes of which she was known to be guilty. She was condemned to suffer a most terrible death. They placed her upon the ground and tied each of her limbs to a wild horse; the horses were then driven in different directions, so that the living body of the wicked queen was torn into pieces. Her bones were afterwards collected and burned.



## VINCENT OF LERINS.

(May 24.)

"Catholic Faith"

VINCENT, as he himself says, spent a great many years of his life in the midst of the noise and confusion of the world; but he at last withdrew from its snares, and entered a religious community. The abbey was situated on the Isle of Lerins, and was in high repute for the holy men who lived or received their education within its walls. Before embracing the religious life, Vincent had been considered a very eloquent man, and in the monastery he devoted himself especially to the study of theology. This enabled him to write a short but excellent work. At that time, in the year 434, dangerous heresies had arisen, and many thousands of Christians were sometimes unable to distinguish between the true and false doctrine. Vincent determined to show in what the Catholic doctrine differs from that taught by all heretics, and how the truth could be discerned in any future controversies that might rise. To this end he wrote a little work under the title of "Commonitory," which was not only an important and instructive work for the time in which it was written, but which is even to this day highly prized by the Catholic Church. It is, therefore, only right, that we should on this, the feast of Vincent of Lerins, make a few extracts from this learned work, especially as we know but very little concerning his life.

"Catholic faith has its foundation in the sacred writings and in the traditions of the Catholic Church. It is necessary that we should accept the interpretations of the Bible made by the Catholic Church, or else every one, by reason of its depth, will place different constructions upon what they read, and there will be as many and as different commentaries, as there are human minds. What is truly and really *Catholic*, (that is *universal*),—is that which all have believed, in all places and at all times. If, therefore a teacher or member of the Church separate from the communion of the Catholic faith, then shall the Catholic prefer the health of the whole body, to the rotten and detached limb; he shall place a higher value upon the decisions of a general council, than upon the arrogance or upon the interpretation of a few. But why does God permit distinguished teachers to proclaim what is erroneous, and thereby cause many to become apostates from the Catholic faith? This question is answered in Deuteronomy:

"Thou shalt not hear the words of that prophet or dreamer: for the Lord your God trieth you, that it may appear whether you love him with all your heart, and with all your soul, or no." (Deuter. 13 : 3.)

A true Catholic, therefore, is one who loves the divine truth, the Church, as the body of Christ, and is one who does not prefer to the Catholic faith, the

authority, love, intellect, eloquence, or philosophy of any mortal man, and who remains firm in the faith. When a Catholic, therefore, hears of any thing new in matters of religion, he should look upon it as a temptation; for according to the words of St. Paul: "There must be also heresies, that they also who are approved may be made manifest among you." (1 Cor. 11 : 19.) But perhaps it may be asked: "Then the religion of the Church of Christ cannot increase?" Indeed it shall increase, but it shall be an INCREASE, and not a CHANGE OF FAITH. Religion must be like the body, which as it advances in years, develops its parts but still remains the same. What limbs the child has, so many also has the man; and what is found in the man, already existed in the infant, although not in as fully developed a state. That which the Fathers have planted in the field of the Church, shall be cultivated and taken care of by the sons; it shall flourish, increase, ripen, and reach perfection; but it is wrong to change, to mutilate or destroy what has been planted. The Catholic Church in her councils never pretended to curtail or add any thing to her doctrines; she only defined, strengthened, preserved, and declared the tradition. When heretics sought to make innovations, then the councils defined more clearly what had been handed down to the Church, they recapitulated the points in question in precise language, and wrote it down for the benefit of posterity, but they never changed the faith.

Therefore he who denies the universality and antiquity of the Catholic Church, asserts that the faithful of all times, the Saints, the virgins, all the monks and priests, the many thousands of confessors, the hosts of martyrs, the cities, peoples, islands, provinces, rulers, empires, nations, in fact that the whole earth, who were embodied in Christ by the Catholic faith, had for so many centuries lived in ignorance and error, had blasphemed and had not known what to believe. No Catholic should permit himself to be misled, when heretics cite passages from the Scriptures and interpret them after their own manner; for they try to cover their pestiferous heresies with the sweet ointment of the divine word, in order to seduce others with greater ease. The apostles of error imitate in this, the example of their master, the devil. As the devil tried to induce our Saviour to sin by quoting the Holy Scriptures, saying: "*It is written*;" so too do heretics, when they desire to entice a Christian away from the old and universal faith of the Catholic Church, begin: "*It is written*."

If, however, Satan and his disciples, the apostles of lies, make use of the divine word of the holy Scriptures, what shall Catholics and sons of Mother Church do to distinguish true from false interpretation? Let them interpret the Bible according to the traditions of the Catholic Church; let them adhere, therefore, to the decisions of the general councils of the Catholic Church, for there the holy Fathers, some of whom were martyrs, some confessors, but all of whom were faithful Catholic priests to the end of their lives, confirmed by their accord, in a legal and solemn manner, the ancient doctrines of the Church,

and condemned all wicked innovations. But if a new question is started in matters of religion, upon which no council has as yet decided, then it must be seen how the opinions of the Fathers of the Church agree concerning the question in debate; but the opinions only of those Fathers must be consulted, who lived in a holy manner and who remained faithful to the Catholic Church. Whatever is taught by one man alone—no matter if he be a bishop, confessor, or even martyr, if it be contrary to the opinions of all, then must it be regarded only as the private opinion of a single individual, and is not to be preferred to the universal doctrine of the Catholic Church.

The Catholic Church teaches the following regarding the doctrine of the Blessed Trinity and Incarnation :

“There is in God ONE substance, but THREE persons; in Christ two substances, but ONE person; the person of the Father is one, that of the Son is one, and that of the Holy Ghost is one; yet there are not three natures, but one and the same nature. In the Son there is a divine substance and a human substance, but the Divinity and Humanity in Him do not belong to two different persons, but to one and the same Christ, one and the same Son of God—as in man the body is different from the soul, yet body and soul form only one and the same man. In Christ therefore are contained two substances, a divine and a human substance, the one from God the Father, the other from the Virgin Mother: the one eternal and equal to the Father, the other from time, and inferior to the Father; the one of the same substance as the Father, the other of the same substance as the Mother, and yet in both substances one and the same Christ; but He is not one through the intermixture of God and Man, but through a perfect and distinct unity of person. This union did not change one nature into the other, but united both in such a manner, that whilst Christ is always but one person, yet the attribute of each of the two natures (the divine and human) exists forever in Him so that in Him, God could never become a body, or the body cease to be a body. It is as with man; man consists of a body and of the soul, but the body will never change into the soul, nor the soul into the body; and this difference of substance will continue to exist forever in every man.

“We confess further, that in the Immaculate conception of the Holy Virgin, man has been united with God in one person, by reason of which unity in the person of Christ there is ascribed to man what belongs to God, and to God what belongs to man; therefore it is said in the holy Scriptures, that the *Son of Man* came down from heaven, and that the *Lord of Majesty* was crucified on earth, and therefore it is also perfectly catholic to say, that the divine Word was born of the Virgin, since on account of the unity in the person of Christ, the Mother of His human nature is also the Mother of the entire Christ. We therefore in all truth call Mary, *the Mother of God*, since in her blessed womb the most holy mystery was accomplished, that is, God united Himself with a human nature in ONE person, and this person in His twofold nature, the divine and human, was



brought forth by Mary. This unity of person is a wonderful and inexplicable mystery, and has such power, that the Church ascribes to the man what is divine, and to God what is human ; for on account of this unity the Church uses in regard to the divine nature the expression, that man descended from heaven, and in regard to human nature, that God suffered and was crucified, and in a like manner she confesses, the man to be the Son of God, and God to be the Son of the Virgin. Happy and venerable confession, blessed and most holy, and to be compared with the heavenly praise of the Angels who glorify the only Lord and God through the threefold sanctification, that proclaims the unity in the person of Christ, and does not violate the mystery of the blessed Trinity !”

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## ST. MARY MAGDALEN OF PAZZI.

(May 25.)

“Poor Sinner.”

NOT unfrequently does a confessor hear a penitent declare : “ I have nothing to confess, I have not committed any sin,”—and if he deems such a thing impossible, especially in the case of persons who show themselves to be indifferent in matters of religion, and hardly think it necessary to perform their Easter duty, the penitent will fly in a passion, as if his honor had been attacked, and if he answers the questions of the conscientious confessor, he will do so in a rude and careless manner, and when he leaves the confessional will perhaps rail against the bigotry of the priest.

The reader of the Lives of the Saints will not be possessed with such a feeling or be so blinded as to look upon himself as free from sin, and yet there are but very few, who are thoroughly and sincerely convinced of their sinfulness and unworthiness in the sight of God. Perhaps, dear reader, when saying the Hail Mary, you repeat the words : “ *Pray for us sinners,*” without really feeling yourself to be a great sinner. One of the reasons of your blindness is, that you generally compare yourself with those who walk in the broad and level road, many of whom who are guilty of enormous crimes ; but you should rather compare yourself with those who follow the strait path, and who pass through the narrow gate, and then you will see that you are in reality a *poor sinner*, and that your soul is naked, deaf, blind, lame, hideous, and covered with the leprosy of sin. The life of St. Magdalen will serve you as a mirror, in which you may see the state of your soul.

St. Mary Magdalen of Pazzi was of a noble Florentine family, and was distinguished even in her childhood by her strong desire to serve God. She was kind

to all, took no pleasure in childish sports, preferring to listen to religious conversation. Whenever she met a priest, she would question him concerning the religious matters, which seemed alone to occupy her thoughts. In her seventh year she commenced to deny herself a portion of her daily food, in order to give it to the poor or to captives; she delighted especially in teaching children their prayers. While at her father's country seat, she zealously instructed the little country girls, and on her return to Florence was so inconsolable, that her parents took one of her little pupils with them to the city. Her love for silent prayer and contemplation increased daily, and if an improper expression reached her ear, she would sometimes weep a whole night. The real presence of Jesus Christ in the Holy Eucharist influenced her so powerfully that she always endeavored to keep near those who had just communicated, and when in her tenth year she was permitted to receive Holy Communion, she was completely dissolved in tears.

From this time Magdalen most earnestly endeavored to conform as much as possible to the example of her Saviour. She refused a soft bed, disciplined herself, put on a crown of thorns and spent whole nights in great bodily pain, but in great spiritual joy, that she could thus imitate Christ. She exercised every species of mortification, lived a most self-denying life, and was most submissive and obedient even to the lowest servant of the house, striving to subdue every feeling of passion or of sensuality. Magdalen's noble parents being without male heirs desired their daughter to marry, so that their family might not become extinct; but Magdalen insisted upon taking the veil, and in her seventeenth year entered the Carmelite order. She here lived a most holy life, doing penance for the many great sins by which God is continually offended upon earth; she tasted no food but bread and water, only on Sundays and holy-days allowing herself her former fast-day meal; she slept on a straw-bed and never longer than five hours. Our Lord once said to her: "Never give any advice without having first stated it to Me, the crucified; perform all thy labors with such gentleness and humility, that they may draw souls to me, and with such consideration, that they may be a rule and guide to other pious souls. As the hart pants after the running water, so shalt thou thirst day and night to manifest thy love towards Me; thou shouldst desire earnestly to be subject to all and to stand in fear of being preferred to any one, and thou shouldst sacrifice to Me continually all thy thoughts and actions."

Her nicety of conscience may be seen in this prayer: "O my Jesus, what was my first thought to-day? It grieves me, that it was not directed to Thee but to the calling together of the sisters at the hour of prayer; I then went to the choir to offer myself to Thee, but I did not resign myself perfectly and thoroughly to Thy will. When I came to Lauds my dissatisfaction in perceiving several irregularities was greater than my care to honor or praise Thee in a worthy manner. When I received Thee in the Holy Communion, an act calling for devo-

tion on my part, I did not meditate upon Thy passion, as Thou didst command, I did not try to unite my soul to Thee, but I considered how I might best obtain peace in my heart. When I confessed my sins, I thought more of what I should say to the confessor, than of the great benefit I might receive in the Sacrament by bathing my soul in Thy blood; neither had I confidence enough in Thee, that Thou wouldst assist me and give me the grace to calm my heart. O my God, what were the first words that I uttered to-day? They were words of blame (as mistress of novices she had reprimanded a novice), and my manner of speaking was not gentle or kind, and the result was, that her heart was troubled, and then I had not charity enough to quiet her again and to reconcile her with me. See, my Lord, how little fruit I bear in spite of so many favors! If Thou hadst bestowed such graces upon any other creature, how gratefully would they not have been received! When at my meals, I thought not of recommending to Thy care the many poor, who can always be found standing before the door begging for a piece of bread, but who receive nothing, while I am provided for, without any labor and merit on my part. I offended Thee also, when I was the cause of another sister giving way to anger. See, my Lord, I discover that in all my actions I offend Thee; how dare I then appear before Thee and pray for gifts or even recommend others to Thee, I myself being unworthy that Thou shouldst look in mercy upon me?"

After the Saint had accused herself of several other faults of the same kind, she continued: "O my Lord, I accomplish nothing without offending Thee, but if I greatly offend Thee to-day, I will not add to my offences by showing a want of confidence in Thee and in Thy mercy. I know, O Lord, that I do not deserve to be forgiven, but Thy blood, shed for me, makes me hope that Thou wilt pardon me." After this examination of conscience Magdalen retired to a lonely place, where she scourged herself severely.

God revealed to the saintly virgin, that she would be obliged for five years to undergo many severe trials, but that she would pass through them triumphantly. During her time of trial and temptation her heart was exposed to blasphemous and impure thoughts, doubts, feelings of pride and haughtiness; fasting became repugnant, and above all, she felt herself completely forsaken and without comfort: she thought that every trace of faith, hope and charity had left her, and to pray and frequent the Sacraments appeared to her useless: her soul was enveloped in a black cloud; but nevertheless she despaired not: with all the energy of her soul she adhered to God, especially in the exercise of humility and mortification; she took upon herself the most menial services in the convent, and accused herself publicly of her sins (for thus she called her most insignificant faults). The prioress, at her urgent request, allowed her to go barefooted. She frequently slept on the floor, always in her habit, and always wore a girdle made of sharp nails. Magdalen had such a desire of suffering for Christ, or as



she called it, of drinking His chalice of vinegar and gall, that she wished to live longer, because there would be no opportunity in heaven.

The love of God which animated Magdalen was so great, that a few days before her death she remarked, that she had never loved any one but God; He was her all in life and death, in time and eternity, and it was beyond her comprehension, how a person could voluntarily commit even a small sin and thus offend His divine Majesty. In consequence of her love of God her whole life was a continual prayer offered to Him. From this love also proceeded her great love for man, and her great zeal to lead those to Christ for whom He had shed His precious blood. She declared herself willing to be deprived of all gifts of grace, if God would only bestow them upon her fellow-creatures—reserving only for herself the right to love and obey God. Believing that wicked priests, like poisoned wells, corrupt the people, Magdalen offered to undergo their punishment herself and even to have her name blotted out from the book of life, if she could thereby obtain for all such the grace of conversion.

Love and humility caused Magdalen to take upon her certain duties, not obligatory on her, as cooking, washing, and sweeping, she was the first and most willing in every toilsome work, although constant fasting had weakened her. When told to take care of herself, she replied: "I am strong, I feel no fatigue; the others have so much to do, that they need a little rest."

She not only nursed the sick most assiduously, but could she have done so, would have suffered willingly in their place. One of the Sisters was blind and consumptive, and in order not to lose a moment in attending to her wants, Magdalen slept with her, and for a whole year carefully waited upon her. With those who were dangerously ill, she sat up for weeks, allowing herself but little sleep, recited prayers for them, read to them the Passion of Christ, excited them to faith, hope, and charity, and sought to awaken in their hearts a sincere love for Christ. When sick herself, she showed the same obedience as when in health; she at first refused to partake of any delicacy, but when told that she was ordered to taste it, she would say: "Blessed be the Lord!" and immediately accepted it.

The older Magdalen grew, the more she desired to suffer, saying: "Since we can not suffer in heaven on account of the love of God, I wish to do so during this life." And her wish in this regard was fully granted. For thirty months she was obliged to keep her bed, suffering continually from spitting of blood, fever, cough, and headache, while her heart was oppressed with grief; yet she retained a perfect union with the will of her Saviour, whom she received daily. She was grateful for being permitted to suffer, and said: "Lord, if it is pleasing to Thee, that I shall keep this bed until the day of judgment, then Thy will be done." At last the day of her deliverance arrived; she lay for three hours in a swoon, when all at once she opened her eyes and said gently and smilingly: "Thanks be to God, the name of the Lord be blessed!" A few hours after she expired peacefully, being in her forty-first year.

After reading the life and death of St. Magdalen, are you willing, dear reader, to acknowledge yourself a POOR SINNER ?

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## ST. PHILIP NERI.

(May 26.)

"H. J. J."

ST. MAGDALEN of Pazzi died May 25th, 1607, and on the 26th of the same month, in 1595, expired another Florentine Saint, Philip Neri.

Philip submitted to be ordained only at the will of his confessor and spiritual adviser, for he did not think himself worthy of the dignity. Thenceforth his life was devoted to the faithful discharge of his spiritual duties. As soon as the church was opened in the morning, he went into the confessional, and even if penitents did not present themselves, he remained, so that no person need leave unheard. In the afternoon he gave instructions and spiritual advice in his own room to all who wished to come. Numbers of all classes were induced by Philip to lead a pious life, even Jews who came were converted to the faith. It became from him a general custom in Rome, to call on the sick in the hospitals, in order to comfort and edify them, and he also visited twice a week all the prisons.

St. Philip was most humble; in the church, where he was accustomed to say mass, he suffered much from the rudeness of the sacristans. He sometimes found the vestry door closed. They would frequently hand him a torn Alb, or call him from the altar, where he intended to say mass, and direct him to another. Philip only prayed for these wicked men, and although he might have said mass in other places, he always returned to the same church, not to lose the merit of patience and humility. His maxim was: "to despise the world, to despise no one, to despise oneself, to despise to be despised." Pope Gregory XIV. created St. Philip a Cardinal, and notified him of his election; but Philip thanked the Pope through the messenger, and said, he would inform his Holiness as soon as the time came when he could accept so great an honor. This he said jestingly, for he had no intention of accepting it. His room contained only a hard bed and a few books; he daily visited several churches, and sometimes spent a whole night in prayer before a church door, or at the Calistine cemetery. His acts of penance for the purpose of mortifying his passions were very severe; but it would be a grievous mistake to imagine from these austerities that St. Philip was either a melancholy or a stern man. The Apostle Paul once wrote: "For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but justice, and

peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost" (Rom. 14 17.); and this was beautifully illustrated in the case of St. Philip, whose peace and joy of heart made him one of the happiest of created beings.

The gaiety of his disposition is fully shown in the many stories related of this Saint. Like St. Anselm, he was convinced that more and more lasting good can be effected with the young, and he therefore lived in constant intercourse with them; even when an old man he would often accompany a group of young people to the gates of the city, where they amused themselves in the open air, and took their dinner; he was greatly delighted in witnessing their happiness and would seat himself in their midst and exhort them to lead a virtuous life. If the young men who lived in his house made much noise when at recreation, and others found fault with it, St. Philip would say: "I do not care if they even split wood on my back, if only they do not sin." When he perceived any one with a sad or gloomy countenance, he would give him a slight box on the ears, saying: "Cheer up!" and he always asserted, that a cheerful person was easier to lead in the path of virtue than one who was gloomy.

In the gaiety of his heart, Philip would frequently do very amusing things. A Capuchin once calling on Philip, behaved quite rudely; as though quite angry, Philip said: "Rude man, begone immediately!" and he threatened to strike him with his slipper; the Capuchin, however, remained in the room with a smiling face. Then Philip said: "Take off your cloak, for you are not fit to wear it in town." The friar replied: "With all my heart, for you have given me such a warm reception that the cold will not trouble me." Philip again acted as though this answer had greatly enraged him, and drove the friar from his room. The latter, without losing in the least his good humor or showing in his countenance any trace of irritation or anger, left the house; but Philip called him back, and embracing him with joy, said: "You have done right, my son, always retain this good humor, for it is truly a path leading to virtue."

The celebrated Cardinal Baronius was a pupil of St. Philip. As an exercise of humility, Philip sent him once with a large pitcher to an innkeeper, noted for his rudeness, to purchase a very small measure of wine, bidding him insist on the innkeeper's first seeing that the pitcher was perfectly clean, and then go with him into the cellar to see that he was not cheated. He also gave him a gold piece to pay for the few cents' worth of wine. Baronius did exactly as he was told, but the inn-keeper thinking that he had come to insult him, abused him, and threatened to beat him if he ever entered his door again.

On another occasion St. Philip gave a biscuit to each of his pupils, just as they were leaving the house to take a walk, bidding them to eat it in the street. Sometimes they were obliged to carry a dog in their arms, or to wash it, or else were commanded to sing some trifling song when in the presence of distinguished persons, and all this was done for the reason that the Saint desired to uproot from the hearts of his disciples the least trace of pride; but as



he acted towards others, so did he with himself. He once walked through the city with his beard only half shaved; sometimes he would carry a large bouquet in his hands, and would often appear most strangely dressed in public. When people called to see him, attracted by his reputation for sanctity, he would relate amusing anecdotes, and laugh as though he enjoyed them greatly; he did this that every one should have a poor opinion of him.

He would sometimes employ very singular means to discover the true state of a soul. A noble youth desired to be received into the congregation established by Philip; the Saint had reason to doubt his vocation, and therefore told him to give some proof of his earnest determination to renounce and despise the vanity of the world; and required him to walk through the streets of Rome, with a fox's tail fastened to his back. The youth objected to this, and at once withdrew his application. Not far from Rome there was a convent of nuns, and one of the sisters had acquired a great reputation for sanctity. The Pope charged Philip with the task of investigating the matter, and on a very rainy day the Saint went on foot to the convent, sent for the nun and asked her to help him off with his wet boots. The nun became very indignant at such an impolite request, and declared herself insulted; but St. Philip, without making any further remark, returned to Rome and said to the Pope: "She is no saint, for she does not possess the virtue of humility."

A very pious citizen of Sienna once came to Rome, and was hospitably entertained by the Oratorians. He observed the Saint conversing with several priests, in a very gay and cheerful manner, and frequently laughing with them. The stranger was in doubt whether Philip merited the wonderful reputation he enjoyed for holiness, yet he made his confession the next morning to St. Philip but said nothing concerning his doubts. The Saint however was endowed with the supernatural gift of detecting the hidden sins of those who confessed to him, and he said to the stranger: "Be careful to make a good confession and conceal none of your sins—why do you not confess that you were last night very greatly scandalized at seeing me laugh so much?" Filled with astonishment the penitent acknowledged that he had been shocked at his gayety, but from that time forward he always cherished the greatest veneration and affection for the holy Philip.

On Corpus Christi, 595, St. Philip said Mass and sang the "Gloria in excelsis Deo," in a loud voice, a thing that he had never done before. The following night, at the time he had predicted, he resigned his pure spirit into the hands of his heavenly Father.

St. Philip often wept bitterly for the sinful condition of many Christians; but to have been ill-humored or melancholy on that account, would have been very unchristian; on the contrary, joy and gladness should fill the heart of a pious person, and the piety of any one who is always morose and unhappy is to say the least, very suspicious. The truly righteous man is joyous and con-

tented, because he knows nothing of the various cares and troubles that annoy the worldly man, for the spirit of humility, patience, and confidence in God prevents any feeling of ill-humor or anger obtaining the mastery over him if he happens to meet with adversity. The hearts of the godly enjoy a comfort unknown to those devoted to the world, a gladness that fills them as with spiritual wine—wine coming from heaven and giving joy, and which has caused many Saints to sing with loud voices, just as they were about expiring.

Perhaps, dear reader, you may have a very good opinion of your virtue, and yet how often after having said your prayers, after having received Holy Communion, have you given way to feelings of ill-humor, and been vexed at every trifle, and thus been a source of scandal to all with whom you live! Consider well that when you act in this manner, it is not the spirit of Christ that dwells in you, but a deformed and wicked spirit.

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## ST. JOHN I.

(May 27.)

"Judgment in the world to come"

TWENTY-THREE Popes have borne the name of John; the first among them was a Saint, whose martyrdom we commemorate to-day. He lived at the time when the great Roman empire had been divided into the eastern and western empires, the capital of the former being Constantinople, and of the latter, Rome. The western empire was then governed by Theodoric, king of the Goths, a zealous Arian, but yet a kind and just sovereign. As a man, however, advances in years, if he does not possess the true spirit of faith, age will improve his disposition as little as it does his appearance. The good qualities with which nature had endowed Theodoric disappeared as he grew older, and he became morose and distrustful, suspecting even his most intimate friends. He lost all the mildness of character for which he had once been distinguished, and from having always been a humane ruler, he became a relentless tyrant.

The eastern empire, on the contrary, was governed by Justin, an upright prince and a good Catholic, who in the earnestness of his heart regarded it as a misfortune that there were so many Arians in his dominion. He therefore issued a decree, in the year 523, excluding from public office all not in communion with the Roman Catholic Church, and closing or giving to the Catholics the churches belonging to the heterodox sect. The Arians informed king Theodoric of these proceedings, and called upon him, as the principal protector of the Arians, to interest himself in their behalf. Theodoric, in consequence, wrote to

urge Justin to revoke the decree, and at last even threatened that he would banish all Catholics from his dominions, if Justin did not restore the churches to the Arians; but the emperor, in his truly Catholic zeal, would not be instrumental in propagating the heresy in his dominions, and he therefore, without listening to the requests or threats of the Arian king, told him that his conscience did not permit him to revoke the decree.

Theodoric then determined to send a formal embassy to Justin, and declared that the Pope should accompany the embassy, threatening if he did not go, to treat the Catholics in his empire as the Arians had been treated by Justin.

Taking into consideration the great danger, in which the Catholics of Italy would be placed, if the anger of Theodoric was aroused, the Pope consented to make the journey. Five Bishops and four high dignitaries, favorable to the Catholic cause, accompanied the Pope.

The inhabitants of Rome were greatly distressed, when the Pope was compelled to leave them. The long voyage, the difficult mission, the fear of seeing him no more, so alarmed them, that many wept when he departed; he however comforted them as much as it was in his power, gave them his blessing, and then embarked.

When the arrival of the Pope became known in Constantinople, the people came for miles and formed a solemn procession to receive the representative of Christ. The emperor himself, accompanied by his court, went outside the city gates, threw himself at his feet, begged for his blessing, and paid him the greatest honors.

John made his solemn entrance into the city through the golden gate. Under the arch of the gate a blind man knelt before him, praying that he, as the representative of Christ, would do to him as Christ himself had done to the blind, and restore him his eye-sight. John touched the eyes of the blind man, made the sign of the cross upon them, and the man was enabled to see. By this miracle, the reverence and respect of the people for the Pope was greatly increased, and although the emperor had already been crowned by the deceased patriarch, he wished to be crowned again by the hands of the saintly John.

Concerning the matter that had brought the embassy to Constantinople, we can only say, that the emperor granted every thing that the Pope asked for, but what these propositions were is not known with certainty. Some historians assert, that John advised the emperor to restore the churches to the Arians, so as to prevent a persecution of the Catholics in Italy; others say, on the contrary, that he strengthened the emperor's resolution concerning the Arians, confident that God would protect the Catholics in Italy.

Meanwhile Theodoric was growing every day more tyrannical. Boetius and Symmachus, two of the most excellent men of Rome, had formerly enjoyed great favor with the king, although they were true Catholics. Distinguished by his



noble descent, his wealth, learning, and piety, Boetius, the son-in-law of Symmachus, had filled the highest offices for the welfare of the state and for the protection of innocence. Slanderers however succeeded in poisoning the king against him, and these two excellent men were imprisoned and afterwards put to death. While in this dark and gloomy state of mind, tormented with suspicion and the desire for revenge, Theodoric was informed of the reception of the Pope by Justin. At this he was filled with feelings of hatred and distrust towards the Pope. On his return St. John was thrown into a dark dungeon, and as no one was permitted to provide him with the least refreshment, he died soon after of hunger.

The life of Pope John shows us for the fourth time in the biographies of this month, another sad spectacle of a holy servant of God, an ordained priest and chief of the Church being persecuted and murdered by sinful and violent princes. A wicked man at times possesses great power, and uses it without any one being able to dispossess him, and the virtuous in consequence are terribly oppressed; this is and has been the case from the beginning of the world, and will be to the end.

Many seeing virtue oppressed and suffering, while vice triumphs, say, that if it were in their power to protect the innocent, and to punish the guilty, they would do so; why then does not God? How can they then believe in the justice of God? We find an excellent answer to this in the second Epistle of St. Peter: "Be not ignorant, my beloved, of this one thing, that one day with the Lord is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. The Lord delayeth not his promise, as some imagine; but beareth patiently for your sake, not willing that any should perish, but that all should return to penance." (2 Peter 3: 8, 9.)

Man, endowed with reason, knows and feels with certainty, that there must and will be retribution in the world to come. God in His greatness looks beyond all time and eternity, and on that account he is slow in what he does. The good are obliged to struggle through the various tribulations and afflictions of this life, and the wicked are permitted to walk about in their pride, but at the proper time, death will overtake the good and the bad, and bring them both into the presence of God—and eternity is then certainly long enough for retribution. That the judgment of God falls visibly upon the guilty even in this world, we have shown in several of the lives of this month. We have read of the manner in which Boleslaus, the murderer of St. Stanislaus, and Wenceslaus, the murderer of St. John Nepomucen, and Brunehildis, the murderess of St. Desiderius, closed their earthly career. Theodoric, it is true, was not deprived of his kingdom, nor did he die a violent death, but the judgment of God commenced to fall upon him even on this side of the grave—for the anguish of his awakened conscience tormented his soul. A very large fish-head was once served at the royal table; when Theodoric saw it, he turned pale and suddenly left the table, saying that it was the head of the murdered Symmachus, gazing at him

in a ghastly manner. In consequence of this great fright he became ill and soon after expired. Three months after the death of the saintly Pope, the soul of his cruel persecutor stood before the tribunal of the Eternal.

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## ST. WILLIAM.

(May 28.)

"Monastic Life."

At the court of the emperor Charlemagne, there lived a count by the name of William, who was distinguished not only for his personal accomplishments, but also for his bravery, virtuous character, and intellect. William enjoyed great influence with the emperor, who in all important affairs sought his advice and assistance.

Just at this time, the Saracens crossed the Pyrenees, and invading the French empire, defeated the Christians and laid waste the country they had overrun. When the emperor was informed of the invasion, he called a council of war. Charlemagne created William a duke, and sent him with an army against the Saracens.

William won several battles and drove the Saracens beyond the frontiers of France, so that they never dared to return. Having then been appointed by the emperor governor of Austrasia, which he had rescued from the Moors, he did not avail himself of the longed-for peace to lead a life of pleasure, but in serving God with more zeal. He regarded it as his duty to care especially for the welfare of the country, and to see justice administered. He showed a paternal care for the monasteries and convents, and endowed them most richly; he himself prepared to found a monastery, and for that purpose undertook a journey to find a place removed from the noise and tumult of the world. He discovered a small plain situated between high mountains, covered with a forest, through which ran a brook, and surrounded by high rocks like the walls of a fortress. Here he found the place that God had shown him, in answer to his fervent prayer, in which to establish a convent. The erection of the church and other buildings was immediately begun with great zeal, and after the monastery was completed, he endowed it very richly, so that the monks who occupied it, free from all the cares of life, could devote themselves entirely to the Divine service.

William's two sisters, who were also pious Christians, asked his permission to spend their days in religious seclusion, and William granted their request with great joy, for his soul was also possessed with the same desire.

After the establishment of his monastery, he returned to his province ; but all earthly wealth and fame, all pomp and pleasure, the wish for heirs to inherit his noble name and large estates, his love for his faithful wife and intimate friends, could not outweigh the resolution he had taken in the piety of his heart. His love of God was so great, that he despised all the honors of the world, and he reproached himself for having been surpassed by his sisters in devotion to the service of God.

While the duke was in this state of mind, he was obliged to return to the court of the emperor. He was received with great joy and honor, and Charles treated him with as much love as if he had been his own son ; but all this was not enough to change his determination, and in the midst of the splendor and the pleasures of the imperial court he thought only of the nothingness of earthly glory, and how it withers away, like the flowers of the field. He finally acquainted the emperor with his resolution, and entreated him to free him from the responsibility of his offices and honors, and to permit him to leave his service and to enter that of God. The emperor was surprised at such an unexpected request, but like a Christian he soon recovered himself, and said : " You have wounded my heart by requesting to leave me, but it would be wrong to oppose your pious wish. If you desired to leave my service for that of another prince, then would I regard it as a great offence : but since it is to enter into the service of the King of heaven, I neither can nor dare refuse your request. I only ask you in remembrance of my love, to accept from me some endowments for your monastery ;"—and having spoken these words, the emperor embraced William and wept long and bitterly.

When William saw the grief of his beloved emperor, he could not refrain from weeping, and he said : " Alas ! I wish that I had never seen the tears of your majesty ! If I had foreseen this, I would have secretly entered the monastery. For the sake of Christ dismiss me not with a sad countenance, but with a joyful heart to the service of our Lord. As regards your generous offer, it is not fit for me to accept earthly treasures in renouncing the world ; besides I myself have wealth enough to endow the monastery ; but if it pleases you to make an offering to me, or rather to God through me, I know of something that I could accept without scruple ; it is the wood of the Holy Cross, which some time ago the Patriarch of Jerusalem sent as a present to you." Although the emperor desired to keep the holy relic himself, he did not refuse it to his faithful servant, and gave it with the valuable setting of gold and jewels in which it was preserved.

To his relatives and friends, who endeavored to dissuade him from his purpose, William replied : " If you can assure me that I can always remain with you on earth and never die, I will listen to your solicitations ; but as you can not do this, then let me seek after the light, the truth, and the only true road to eternal life. Although I might perhaps remain with you for a little while, yet



you know well that death would soon take me from you." Firm and unwavering in his resolution, he endowed the churches, the poor, and his servants liberally, but his splendid arms he gave as an offering to a church built in honor of the holy martyr and warrior Julian.

When drawing near the place of his destination, he perceived the abbey in the valley of Gellon, he thanked God, saluted the house, and implored the Holy Ghost to enrich its inmates and himself also with the divine grace, and having approached the monastery, he was met by the joyful brethren and led in procession into its walls. There he made known his wish of being received as a monk into their community; with astonishment and joy his desire was granted, and on the feast of SS. Peter and Paul he became a member of the order. It was a beautiful spectacle to witness this famous warrior and statesman devoting himself to the service of Jesus Christ. He who had formerly lived in splendid palaces and castles, surrounded by princely pomp, now preferred to spend his life far from the noise of the world in the corner of a secluded monastery; he, who had formerly made laws, governed a vast country, had numberless servants at his disposal and been the commander of great armies, now submitted to be commanded and advised by poor monks and lay-brothers—and chose for God's sake to be submissive and serviceable to every creature. This spirit of humility and imitation of Christ, was not with William, as is often the case with others, a mere blaze of momentary enthusiasm, but went on daily increasing. He requested the abbot of the monastery to have no regard for his former position in life, and to impose upon him the most common duties; he begged the lay-brothers also to regard and use him as their servant, and these were not mere empty words, for William was filled with the spirit of true humility. Whenever he saw a brother at any menial labor, he would immediately assist him or take it upon himself. When living in the world he had always at his disposal the most splendid horses and chariots; but now in time of harvest he did not hesitate to carry loads, for the removal of which horses had been formerly used. At his request he was placed in the kitchen, and he provided himself with the necessary wood, prepared the vegetables, cooked them, and washed the dishes, thus becoming a true disciple of our Saviour, who after the washing of the feet, said: "For I have given you an example, that as I have done to you, so you do also." (John 13 : 15.)

It was once necessary for the fire to be quickly extinguished, to preserve the dinner from being burned. William resorted to prayer, made the sign of the cross, stepped upon the fire and quenched it without receiving the least injury. This miraculous occurrence showed all how unbecoming it was for so holy a man to be engaged in these labors, and he was therefore ordered to refrain from all manual labor, so as to enable him to give himself up entirely to the practice of virtue. Until that moment his manner of life had been like that of Martha, he now imitated that of Mary. He zealously employed his time in

trying to advance in Christian perfection by fasting, penance, prayer, and contemplation, and by frequenting the holy sacraments; he predicted the time of his death, and exhorted the weeping brethren not to mourn, but to rejoice with him, that he had safely reached the gate of heaven.

We are told, that at the time of his death the bells of the abbey and of all the churches in the neighborhood, were heard ringing without the assistance of any man, as if the angels had thus wished to announce their joy to the world, that so beautiful and holy a soul had entered and been received into their company.

St. William is not the only prince who renounced the world and joined a religious order, and who has shown more pleasure in the quiet of a monastic life than in all the joys and pomp of the world. One of the mightiest emperors that ever lived, Charles V., of whose empire it was said, that the sun never set upon it, became so disgusted with the vanity of earthly things, that he renounced his power, and retired into a monastery. From the beginning of Christianity down to the present day, millions of men in the different countries where the Catholic Church has spread her branches, have entered religious orders, and finding a safe protection from the world and its troubles, served God in peace and quiet. As a man is more piously inclined and better disposed during the hours he spends in prayer and in church, than he is either at home or when surrounded by the tumult of the world, so also is the inmate of a religious house enabled to be more perfectly occupied with the thoughts of God, than the busy man of the world. Free from all care of temporal things, free from family troubles, free from doubts respecting the actions of others,—the religious has only to obey the rules and orders of the superior;—life is more simple and its road more straight; time is spent only in religious exercises and in attending to such affairs as have for their object the honor of God and the benefit of his fellow-creatures. It is for this reason that so many pious persons desire to enter convents, although their circumstances may not permit them to do so. Those, who enjoy the happiness of belonging to a religious order, should thank God that they have escaped from the many dangers of the world into a place of refuge, a place of safety, as far as safety can be obtained in this life. For what is written of the Church, is true also of a religious community: "It is the gate of Heaven."

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## BLESSED ANDREW.

(May 29.)

"Calumny"

ON the twenty-eighth day of May in the year 1453, the Turks took by assault the great and splendid capital of the Grecian empire, Constantinople, and from that time it has always been the residence of their sovereign—the Sultan. The Turks do not generally force Christians to become apostates, but every Mohammedan, who becomes a Christian, is punished with death. A few years after Constantinople had fallen into the possession of the Turks, a youth from the island of Chios named Andrew, came to that city, and being a Christian, was frequently seen attending the churches. Several Egyptian merchants asserted that this young man had once been a Turk, that they had seen him when in Alexandria spit upon a crucifix, trample upon it and throw it in the mud—and that consequently he must have apostatized from the Mohammedan faith.

This calumny was to Andrew like a two-edged sword, for to the Christians he appeared as a sacrilegious hypocrite, and by the Turks he was threatened with death. In consequence of being denounced by the Egyptians, Andrew was brought before the tribunal and accused of being an apostate. He proved by many witnesses, that he had never been in Egypt, that before his journey to Constantinople he had never left the island of Chios, a fact that could be verified by the inhabitants of the island. The Turkish judge however declared that the testimony of the Christians was of no value to him in this case, as they were prejudiced in his favor; the Christians on the other side declared, that the testimony of the Mohammedans alone was not sufficient to condemn him, if justice was properly administered.

The judge now resorted to another expedient, in order to discover the real facts of this case. The Turks, like the Jews, recognize the law of circumcision, and they circumcise not only all male children, but also every adult who becomes a Mohammedan; if Andrew therefore had ever been a Mohammedan, he must have been circumcised; but in the examination of his person he was found without any trace of this sign of the Jewish or Mohammedan religion. We should imagine this to have been a clear proof that Andrew had never been a Turk, that consequently he was not an apostate, and that he would have been at once acquitted; but his accusers, in order not to appear guilty of a lie, immediately concocted a new story. They said, that in Egypt all the male children of Mohammedan parents were circumcised, but that if an adult became a Mohammedan, and refused to be circumcised on account of the pain it would cause him,



then he was exempt from the circumcision, if he only promised to observe the other laws of the religion. This declaration of course created new doubts in the mind of the judge as to whether Andrew might not really be an apostate, and he therefore declined to make any decision in the affair, but submitted the whole case to the Sultan.

The Egyptian merchants were true countrymen and brethren of the Egyptian woman, who caused Joseph to be cast into prison and his life imperiled. It may be that calumny does not always cause imprisonment or death to a person, but it is like thrusting a sharp knife in a cowardly manner into the breast of a fellow-being. We will however not now speak of the injury and pain caused to the person calumniated, but of the black crime of the calumniator. The New Testament is written in the Greek language, and it is a remarkable and very significant fact, that the name of the devil (*diabolos*) is derived from the word "to calumniate;" (*diaballein*); it is thereby indicated, that the CALUMNIATOR IS A DEVIL, and the DEVIL A CALUMNIATOR, and in truth there is no sin on which the character of Satan is so clearly stamped, as on that of calumny; for there, hatred and falsehood cling to each other like two serpents. God is truth and love; Satan is the father of lies and hatred,—and calumny is hatred and untruth united.—On the first day of this month we spoke of the sin of slander, and certainly no one who is accustomed to indulge in this vice, can be regarded as a good Christian; yet there are many who slander their neighbors more from a spirit of levity and for the sake of talking, than from any hatred they bear them: but he who wickedly and deliberately invents lies concerning others, is not much better than a devil. There are not many, perhaps, who will devise as wicked and unfounded a lie concerning a fellow-creature as did the wife of Potiphar, but many so-called Christians act precisely like the Egyptian merchants, that is, they state as a fact, what is only a mere supposition on their part; or else they spread rumors without taking time to investigate whether they are true or not, or as is sometimes the case, they may greatly exaggerate the truth and add what is not true. For all this will they be held responsible, and as a stolen thing must be returned, so must they repair the injury they have inflicted by their falsehoods or exaggerations, by recalling their words in the presence of those who listened to them; for the honor of man is certainly of more importance than a piece of money or an article of dress.

The accusation against Andrew had been reported to the Sultan; hearing that Andrew was a tall and well-formed young man, he gave him the choice either to profess the Turkish religion and accept the rank of an officer in the army, or be beheaded. The following day, Andrew was brought before the tribunal, made acquainted with the decision of the Sultan, and at the same time told what an honor it was for him to become a captain in the army. As Andrew made no answer, several other Turks promised him money and many advantages, if he would become a Mohammedan; but Andrew again made no answer,

at which they felt offended, and asked if they were not worthy of an answer ; he then said : " What you have said to me is in fact unworthy of a reply : shall I prefer this perishable life to heaven ? " " You are mistaken," they replied ; " we will show you the right way to heaven, and at the same time fill your earthly life with pleasure." " I care not for the happiness of this world," replied Andrew, " but I will never deny either the cross, the passion, or the sepulchre of my Saviour Jesus Christ. Do with me as you please, only trouble me not with your offers."

Andrew was then led back to his prison, and the following day they sought to change his mind by ill-treatment. He was tied naked to a post and dreadfully beaten. At first the pain caused him to clench his hands and draw them up at his breast, and he exclaimed : " O Holy Virgin Mother, help me ! " Afterwards, however, he stood erect and remained thus standing until sunset. When the executioners had taken him back to his dungeon, they put salve upon his wounds, and provided him with meat and drink : for they wished to prolong his life, in order, if possible, yet to induce him to become an apostate. The following day he was again led forth and his back cruelly torn open with iron hooks ; but as he bore it without murmuring, he was again sent to his dungeon and treated as he had been the day before. The third day he was placed upon the rack, and his limbs were so stretched, that his fingers, elbows, and knees were pulled completely out of joint. Thus they continued to torture him for several days ; they tore open again the wounds that had commenced to heal, cut off the calfs of his legs, and one of his cheeks, being careful, however, to keep life within him as long as possible. But as Andrew, in spite of all his sufferings, continued to profess the faith of Christ in the face of his blood-thirsty persecutors, they became tired of making any further attempts to convert him, and a week after his torments began, he was beheaded. His body was condemned to be thrown into the sea ; but influential Christians brought the matter before the Sultan, who, when told how long and cruelly Andrew had been tortured, rebuked the judge for his inhumanity ; and allowed them to bury the remains of Andrew in an honorable manner, because he had been a courageous man.

The body of the martyr was entombed in the Church of the Mother of God, in the presence of very many Christians, and his death was followed by many blessings. The Sultan, disgusted with the cruelty with which the unwavering Andrew had been treated, acquitted another Christian who was imprisoned on account of a similar accusation ; others were strengthened in their faith by the example of the martyr ; some who had become Mohammedans for the sake of temporal advantages, were roused to an acknowledgment of their guilt.

Everything, even the calumnies of wicked men, turns to the advantage of those who love God. Were it not for the false accusation of the Egyptian merchants, Andrew would not have become one of the noble army of martyrs ; and

if it had not been for the calumny of Potiphar's wife, Joseph would never have risen to the highest rank in Egypt. Upon the slanderer, however, falls the full weight and guilt of his satanic sin, and he has as little share in the good that God sometimes brings forth out of a calumny, as Judas has in the salvation of the world, that followed upon the crucifixion of Jesus Christ, although through his treachery his Lord and Master was delivered up to death.

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## THE NUNS OF THOESS.

(May 30.)

"Monastic Life."

FIVE hundred years ago there was in the Canton of Zurich, in Switzerland, a convent of nuns, called the convent of Thoess, after the brook near which it was built. Many sisters, living here, were distinguished for their great piety and virtue, and several of them whose life and death later sisters had written in the chronicle left us, are reported as having died on the thirtieth of this month. Among them was

BARBARA OF LIEBENBERG.—She was a kind but worldly woman during the life of her husband. When the latter died, and was not allowed to be buried in consecrated ground, because he had been excommunicated, his body was put for a while in the charnel-house. The afflicted widow went there daily, and with a heart sad and full of grief, took her seat by the bier of her husband and recited the prayers for the dead. Some time after she saw worms creeping out and falling from the coffin. This sight made such an impression upon her mind, that she determined to withdraw from the vain world. She went therefore to Burgundy to see her beloved mother and to ask her advice. While there, a saintly monk arrived in the neighborhood, and both women sent for the religious, and had many pious conversations with him, in consequence of which they resolved to join the sisterhood in the convent of Thoess. Barbara with her mother and four sisters took the veil, and as she served God with her whole heart and strength, she enjoyed also His comfort and blessing. She lay sick in bed for many years, but her disease did not prevent her from fervently reciting her prayers. We are told also, that she was favored with divine revelations and visions.

ANNA OF KLINGMAN.—All her thoughts were directed towards attaining perfection. She spoke continually of divine things, and with such modesty and wisdom, that no one was ever tired of listening to her; and if persons in her presence spoke too much of worldly affairs, she generally succeeded in turning



the conversation upon a religious subject. Anna made it her special task and duty to comfort afflicted sisters, and none ever called on her without having been greatly comforted and edified. All the days of her life, we may say, were spent in earnest and fervent prayer, in reading the lives of the Saints, in speaking of God and of heaven, and in comforting the afflicted and the sick.

BELI OF WINTERTHUR conscientiously observed the rules of the order, and was most zealous in praying, fasting, and watching. After matins she recited the entire rosary, and would then scourge herself severely with a juniper-branch. She always wore a label on her sleeve with this inscription: "JUST AS MUCH AS ONE RESTRAINS HIS OWN WILL, WILL HE INCREASE IN PERFECTION, AND, NO MORE." When Beli was dying, a sister happened to come into her cell, and seeing her at the point of death, ran out into the hall and called out: "She is departing!" Having heard the words, Beli asked: "Who is departing!" and the sister having answered: "You!" Beli laughed with joy and yielded up her blessed spirit into the hands of the angels. This happy death, says the Chronicle, did she gain through the intercession of the holy King David, whom she greeted every year in his psalms, which she always recited with great devotion.

ADELAIDE OF FRAUENBERG commenced, even in her fourteenth year, to say the Lord's Prayer five times every morning in honor of the five wounds of the Saviour, and if she was prevented from doing so, she would deny herself a part of her daily food. She entreated God, most fervently, to assist her in turning her thoughts from this world, or to visit her with disease, in order that undisturbed by the world, she might be able to devote herself wholly to His service. She was charitable in the highest degree towards the poor and sick. A person who was looked upon as leprous, and whose own mother abhorred him, she nursed so attentively, without shrinking from any service she could render him, that she became ill. Submitting to the wish of her noble parents she had married a man of high rank, although she would have preferred to lead a monastic life; a few years later, however, her husband died, and although her relatives endeavored to persuade her to marry a second time, she succeeded by her prayers, tears and resistance, in forcing them to desist from their worldly design, and Adelaide was received into the community of the sisters of Thoess. Here she surpassed all in the practice of Christian virtues, especially in charity and love to the poor and suffering. She found great delight in the contemplation of the infancy of Jesus, and in the simplicity of her heart she offered herself to the Mother of God for the purpose of serving the Infant. She wished to die as a martyr, that her skin might be stripped off her body so as to make swaddling-clothes for the Infant, that her blood might be shed, to serve as a bath to the divine Child.

Adelaide was blessed with old age, and after she had been sick for six months, suffering very patiently, she breathed her last in peace.

LUCY SCHULTHEIS entered the Convent of Thoess when still very young, and without having a really decided vocation for a religious life. She became dangerously sick, and desiring with all her heart to remain longer in this world, she entreated a pious nun, who had called on her, to pray to God that her life might be prolonged. The sister promised to do so, under the condition, however, that Lucy should henceforth every day say devoutly the Lord's Prayer and Hail-Mary fifteen times, in honor of the bitter suffering and death of our Lord Jesus Christ. Lucy followed this advice, and soon recovered. By these pious exercises her devotion increased so much, that she soon found her greatest delight in prayer, and in meditating upon the passion of our Saviour, which always caused her to shed bitter tears. She was so happy in the contemplation of spiritual things, and was so utterly regardless of the world, that for thirty years she never looked down into the garden, up towards heaven, or upon the surrounding fields.

While occupied in these spiritual exercises, sister Lucy was greatly troubled with the fear of not reaching the divine intuition; for she was so humble and thought so very little of herself, that she dared not raise her eyes heavenward, and yet she did not desist from her efforts to attain it. The anxiety and anguish of her mind lasted from Septuagesima Sunday until Holy Thursday, when we are told that a voice from heaven comforted her.

Lucy was ill for seven years and suffered greatly, until at last she died peacefully in the Lord, eternal joys awaiting her.

IDA SULZER was for a long while greatly troubled, and in much doubt, whether she could not serve God more perfectly in another place or in another condition, than in charge of the kitchen in the convent of Thoess. In this distressed state of her soul, she prayed: "Almighty God, if it be Thy divine will that I shall serve Thee in this condition and in this convent, make it known to me; if these coals will burn me, I shall thereby recognize Thy will, that I must serve Thee in another condition; if they burn me not, then I shall serve Thee here, and remain as I am;" and while she prayed thus, she took into both her hands hot coals from the hearth, and behold the miracle of God! the live coals did not burn her, and in her great joy she ran with the coals in her hands into the cross-passage; but then she feared that she might be seen by the other sisters, who would regard it as vanity; she therefore threw the embers into her dress and returned into the kitchen, where placing the coals upon the hearth, she found that she had burned neither her hands nor her dress. She thanked God from the bottom of her heart, remained henceforth in the convent, and increased daily in piety and all Christian virtues. To sister Ida we are told were revealed many wonderful mysteries; she died in peace after a long life on earth. The day of her funeral was so stormy and rainy, that the wind extinguished all the tapers; but they were relit by a messenger from heaven, and the wind did not affect them again.

MELCHTILDIS OF STANZ was an entire stranger when she entered the convent of Thoess, and she turned therefore all her thoughts to God, and prayed that He might become her comforter and friend. Every Friday during the year, the day upon which she received holy communion, and during the whole of Advent and Lent, she abstained entirely from speaking, and she was so obedient, that she always fulfilled her duties with a joyful heart. Melchtildis sought every opportunity to hear, read or speak of the bitter sufferings and death of our Saviour, and if they were spoken of, while she was in the refectory, the feelings of her heart were such that she could not eat. She implored God most fervently to make her feel in her body the pain that Jesus Christ had suffered in receiving the five wounds, and in answer to her prayer she was visited with many afflictions. For fourteen months she was confined to her bed without the sisters being able to discover what ailed her, for she lay always as if breathing her last. While in this state, a learned and experienced physician came to the convent of Thoess, examined her case, and declared that she had no bodily disease, but that an excessive love possessed her heart, in consequence of which she was so very weak. It was her great love and desire for God. We are told also, that the sanctity of Melchtildis was manifested by many miracles after her death.

Centuries have passed away, since these pious women passed to a better world: the convent of Thoess no longer exists, the inhabitants of the neighborhood have become Protestants, and the capital of the canton to which the convent belonged,—the city of Zurich—now offers to the traveller a life very different from that led in a quiet convent. Mail-coaches, noisy railroads and steamboats bring thousands of travellers to Zurich; its hotels are larger and better furnished than many a princely castle, and they are crowded with attentive waiters, and with travellers from all parts of the world. The streets are filled with tradesmen of all kinds and classes, and commerce and industry flourish: but the churches are closed during the week; the protestant city of Zurich has now no festivals, and on Sundays no church will be found thronged, for the reason that many people there no longer believe in Christ.

And now, dear reader, imagine this world-renowned city of Zurich as it now is, and the forgotten convent by the brook of Thoess, as it was, placed side by side, and reflect, in which of the two would God and our crucified Saviour take greater delight? No doubt, the worldly-minded person will call a monastic life a life of idleness, and will praise highly a city full of industry and commerce, but in truth and before God, it is just the reverse. True idlers in fact are those persons who toil day and night, who are occupied with nothing but worldly affairs and matters, and who on that account find no time to serve God and to care for their immortal souls. Such a life, in which the attainment of wealth is the only object, is the field of thorns, in which, our Saviour says, the good seed of grace is stifled: "For what shall it profit a man, if he gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" All that is great and important in the eyes of the world,



is before God like a flake of snow, and is also unable to procure real happiness in this life. Instead of plundered and devastated convents there are now vast barracks and great factories: but does a reasonable man believe the many thousands of soldiers and factory girls to be happier than the inmates of the convents? No, they are more unhappy almost in every respect, but especially as regards their spiritual condition. A truly religious convent, on the contrary, is in the eyes of God a garden, where good plants thrive, and not unfrequently very precious plants, and where fruits are ripening for life everlasting. In the eyes of God, that is lovely and valuable, which the world despises and avoids as an evil. This truth is expressed also in the words of Anna of Klingman, who when inspired wrote upon her distaff: "*The more sick and infirm thou art, the more do I love thee. The more despised thou art by the world, the nearer art thou to me. The poorer thou art, the more equal art thou to me.*"

### BLESSED CAMILLA.

(May 31.)

"Passion of Christ"

ON a mountain near the city of Gran, in Hungary, stands a church with chapels by the roadside, containing the stations of the Passion of Christ. The large stone figures are painted very life-like. As we were once ascending the hill, a lamb came slowly down, stepped before one of the chapels, and looked in as though meditating what she saw. It made a deep impression on our mind, to see the lamb, the symbol of the suffering Saviour, pausing before an image of the suffering Saviour in the chapel.

The life of blessed Camilla reminded us again of this simple occurrence, for she also has become a lamb, a likeness of our suffering Saviour, from having constantly meditated upon His passion. Camilla wrote her own life, and we continue therefore in her own words.

"I was eight or ten years old, when one Good-Friday I heard from the lips of a priest a vivid description of the Passion of Christ. As he ended his sermon he exhorted and entreated his hearers most urgently to remember the Passion of Christ, and at least upon every Friday to devote to him A TEAR of love; this, he said, was more agreeable to God and more beneficial to the soul, than any other good work. This sermon and exhortation impressed me so deeply, that I made a vow to shed a tear every Friday in remembrance of the Passion, and out of love to Christ. Doing this caused me at first much trouble, and I was satisfied, when with great difficulty I succeeded in shedding a tear. I told my

confessor of my vow, and he urged me to keep it, remarking, however, that I should not regard it as a sin, if my efforts were not always attended with success.

“While I continued thus struggling for a long time, I met with a little book containing meditations upon the Passion of Christ, divided into fifteen stations. I resolved to say these stations, and by divine grace I succeeded in weeping much more and with less difficulty, than before. I once on a certain Friday was obliged to work until midnight, and I was greatly tempted to omit my usual exercises; but I overcame my drowsiness and recited my prayers, by doing which, as was afterwards shown, I escaped from a very great danger.

“Gradually I found so much delight in this spiritual exercise, that I resolved henceforth to devote to it not only Friday, but every day of the week, and to occupy myself with it as long as my soul inhabited my body. In thus contemplating the Passion of Christ, the gift of tears was bestowed upon me, so that I could not help weeping even in the presence of others. Sometimes I had to hear vexatious remarks on that account, but disregarding them I turned all my thoughts to God. This continued for three years, during which I ate nothing on Fridays but bread and water, watched carefully against giving way to my predominant passion, rose in the night to say my rosary and scourged myself severely. All this I did not merely for the enjoyment of happiness in my future life, but rather to make myself happy in my earthly life. My heart was still divided between God and the world; for as soon as I attended to my devotions and spiritual exercises, I gave myself up again to the idleness and frivolities of youth. I took pleasure in dressing handsomely, in reading amusing books, in going to balls, in singing, and in all manner of worldly follies. It happened providentially, however, that I heard in Lent a sermon, in which the priest endeavored with much energy and success to awaken in his hearers the true fear of God. I was so impressed with the truth of his remarks, that I should almost have despaired on account of my sins, had I not remembered that to despair of God's mercy was the greatest of all sins. I shed day and night tears of repentance, increased my devotions, so that I now daily made meditations upon the Passion of Christ, ate but a few crumbs of bread on Friday, and permitted myself but very little sleep. Then my heart told me, that I must renounce the world, if I desired to save my soul, and although these admonitions were very distasteful to me, they continued troubling me, and yet I could not make up my mind to renounce the world with all its pleasures. But divine grace kept knocking unceasingly at the entrance of my heart, partly through the exhortations I heard in sermons, and partly through the voice of my own conscience; but being still unwilling to obey, the latter became so loud, that I would sometimes close my ears—but in vain, for the voice came not from the body, but from the spirit. Once on a Friday, however, when I struggled so that I was bathed in sweat, divine grace assisted me in conquering myself, and I resolved

with all the strength of my soul henceforth to serve God, and to die a martyr's death, rather than to break my resolution. As rest is most sweet and beneficial to the fatigued body, thus also did I now rejoice in peace and quietness of spirit after I had yielded to the will of God; and when I took the veil in the convent of Urbino, my soul and heart were filled with joy unspeakable, whereas formerly it had appeared to me almost impossible to withdraw from the world. According to the monastic rule I changed my name and was henceforth called Baptista.

Living now in the convent, I entreated the Lord from the bottom of my heart, to let me experience what He had suffered while upon earth, and I proposed to myself to employ all the time, devoted to religious exercises, in the contemplation of the Passion of Christ, and to throw myself with the whole strength and fervor of my spirit into the most bitter sea of sufferings with which the heart of Jesus Christ was overwhelmed. And the grace of the Holy Ghost led me into the bitterness of the heart of Jesus, so that my soul often seemed to endure the torments of hell, and yet I knew that what I suffered was as little like that experienced by the heart of Jesus, as is a grain of sand when compared with the whole universe. Thus my soul was baptized in water and fire—in the water of tears, and in the fire of a glowing and ardent love.

The contemplation of the Passion of Christ called forth a desire to have all the days of my life changed into a Good-Friday: for I desired continually to mourn the most bitter Passion of my Lord, so that He might appear to me at the hour of my death as one risen and glorified. Henceforth I made no distinction between Easter or Christmas, or any other feast, but upon all such days occupied myself with the Passion of Christ as on Good-Friday."

Among all subjects of meditation, none is better and more beneficial, than the Passion of Christ. Gratitude demands that we should often and earnestly meditate on the bodily and spiritual anguish that our greatest benefactor, Jesus Christ, underwent for our sake. His cross is the true Jacob's ladder, by which the soul ascends to God as often as we contemplate with real devotion the Passion of Christ. This contemplation leads you, dear reader, to repent of your sins, your soul becomes enriched in love and fidelity to its Saviour, it becomes more humble, patient, abstemious, in a word more fit for heaven. We call, therefore, to-day most earnestly upon you to make the resolution to spend a portion of every day in meditating upon the Passion of Christ. If this is difficult, read daily part of a station and meditate upon it; if you are too much occupied during the day to gain a little time for contemplation in solitude and quiet, meditate while at work instead of losing your time in idle thought and empty talk. Every such contemplation is a grain of gold to your soul, and the more time and devotion you expend for that purpose, the more important and valuable is your gain. Let no day pass by henceforth without striving for such a gain!



The life of blessed Camilla resembled a long Way of the Cross, as her principal occupation consisted in contemplating the Passion of Christ, and the way of the Cross led her to a great height of perfection. She became so humble, that she implored God most fervently to bestow all the graces she received upon another soul, who would know how to appreciate them. She asked of God no other favor, than to know Him and to feel her own weakness; she did not crave manifestations of special love towards herself, for she feared that she might thereby be withdrawn from the love of God. In imitation of Christ, who became poor to make others rich, she was kind and charitable towards others and most severe and self-denying to herself; she never spoke ill of her neighbors, was blind to the faults of her fellow-beings, and if any one sought to repeat to her evil reports, she discouraged them by severe looks. Her love for her enemies was so great, that she delighted in every opportunity offered her of benefiting them by word or deed, and she prayed for them with all her heart. Perfect obedience to the orders of her superiors she regarded as an offering most agreeable to God, and her love of poverty was so great, that she desired nothing from the world, but every thing from her crucified Saviour.

Camilla was a descendant of the rich and noble house of Varano, and yet she entered a convent of the poor Clares, whose members live a more self-denying life than most orders in the Church. She died as Abbess in the convent of Camerino, in Italy. When in the year 1593, sixty-six years after her death, her body was exhumed, a sweet odor arose as soon as the coffin was opened, and while the rest of her body had become dust, her tongue remained red and soft to the touch, like that of a living person. At this sight the confessor of the convent exclaimed in the words used by St. Bonaventure, when looking at the tongue of St. Anthony of Padua, that likewise had remained uncorrupted: "O blessed tongue, that always praised God, and taught others to praise Him! Now has it become known, how great was thy submission to the will of God!"

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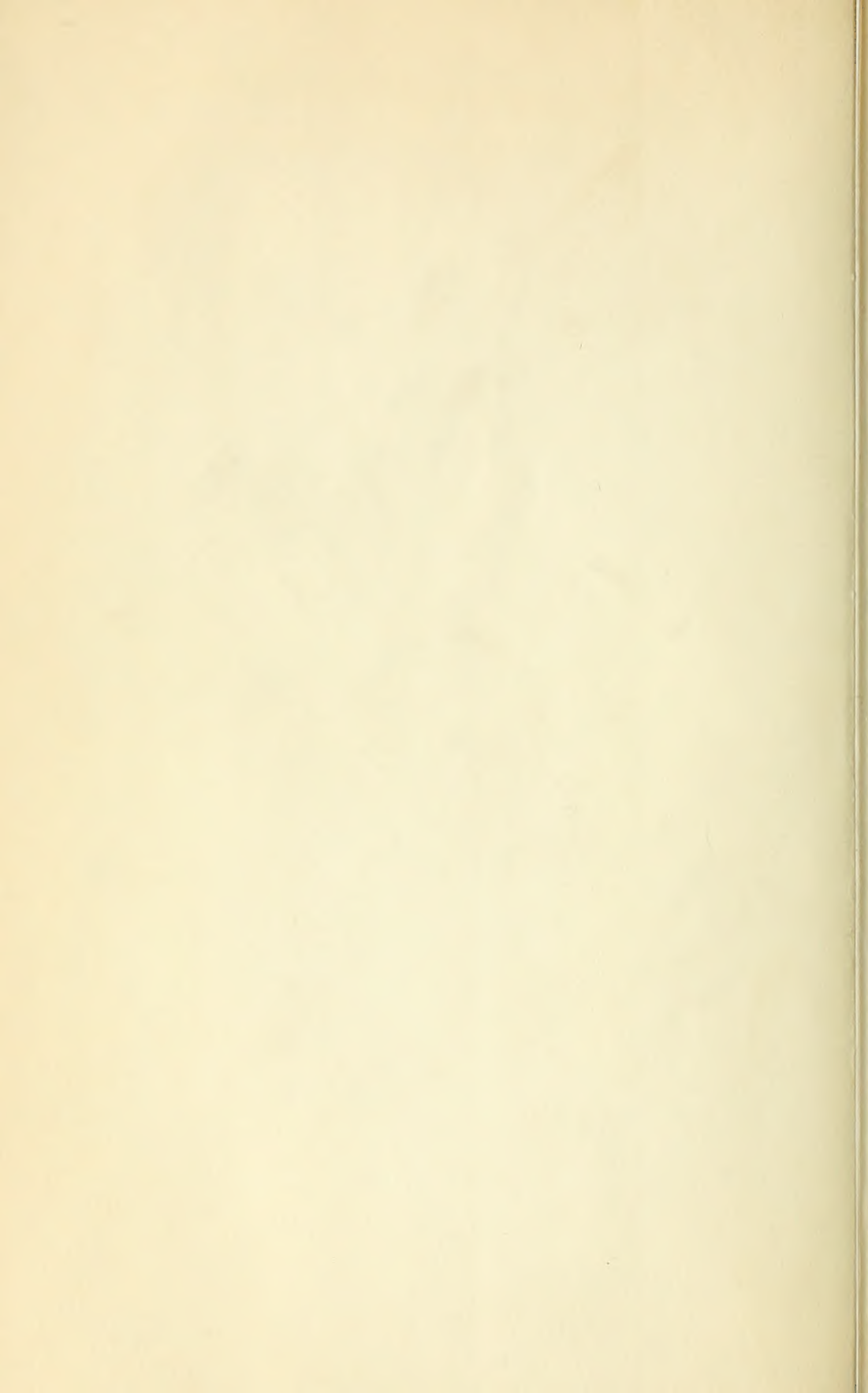
ED A general alphabetical table of the Saints of the whole work and a distinct table of the mottoes, will be given at the close of the second volume.











Bayerle, B.G.

The Ecclesiastical year...

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